

PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED

Exclusive!

THE NWO IS READY
TO DUMP BISCHOFF!



PRO **Wrestling** ILLUSTRATED

KEN SHAMROCK'S DEADLY CLIMB TO THE TOP

RANDY SAVAGE & ELIZABETH
Full-Color Centerfold

PERRY SATURN: FROM ONE EXTREME TO THE OTHER
First In A Series

WWF LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT DIVISION
10 Ways To Make It A Success

December 1997

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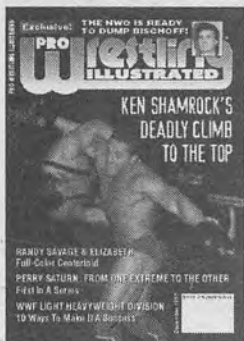
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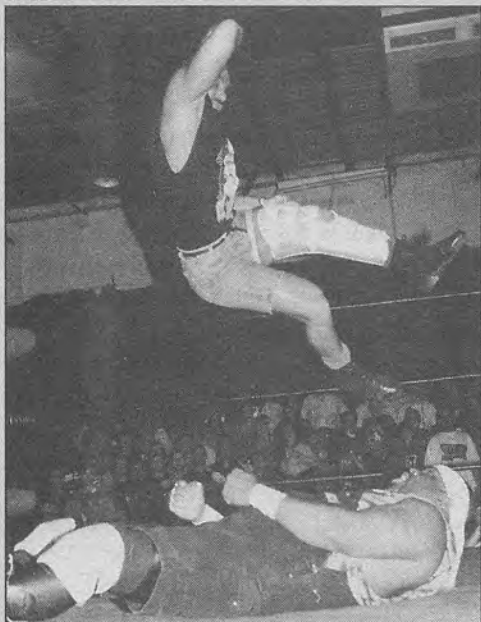
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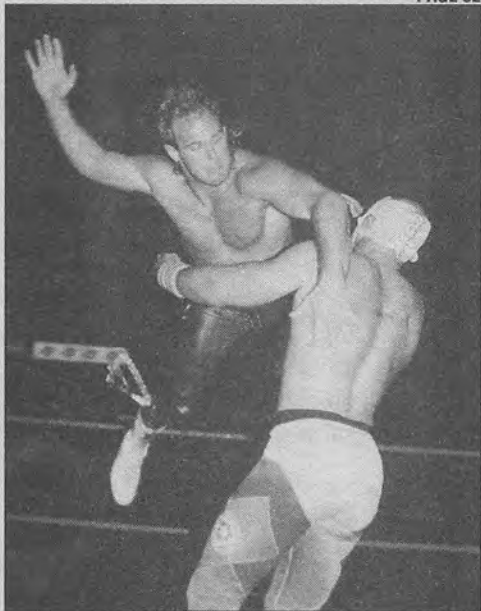


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Lisa Witter

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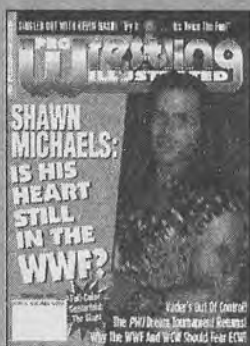
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HART PROBLEMS



Shawn Michaels became the "Disappearing Kid" in June, as he left the WWF after a locker room altercation with Bret Hart. As Shawn got ready to return, the question we asked in our October 1997 issue ("Shawn Michaels: Is His Heart Still In The WWF?") was more relevant than ever. Even some diehard Shawn fans had trouble answering it.

"I think Shawn really wants to join his friends in WCW," wrote Shannon Cleary of Lewiston, Idaho. "He hasn't looked happy since Kevin Nash left."

"Moving to WCW would be a big mistake," Mike Allen of Lexington, Kentucky, wrote. "He'd be in the shadow of Hall, Nash, and everyone else crowding the top. In the WWF, he's the top guy, with only Austin to really compete against for popularity."

"I hope Shawn stays in the WWF," said Zoe Tyler of Vineland, New Jersey. "Sure, he doesn't have his friends, but he does have his loyal fans. We are always here for him and won't leave for money like his friends did."

"I'm tired of everyone worrying about Shawn's welfare," said Gary Jerome of Jewett City, Connecticut. "He runs off every time things don't go his way."

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

I can't understand why fans hate Bret Hart so much. So far, with the exception of his attack on Pat Patterson, everything he has said or done has been justified. He's merely speaking his mind. Just listen to the reception that lowlife Steve Austin is getting in U.S. arenas.

What American fans need to understand is that just because they hate what Bret is saying, it doesn't mean that he's automatically the most hated wrestler in the world. In fact, the WWF promotes itself extensively outside of the U.S. and since *PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED* is also extensively read all over the world, a large chunk of *PWI* readers don't have anything against him.

PAUL STEVENSON
Ayrshire, Scotland

WHY, THANKS!

Thank you ever so much for the special "Supercards '97" issue (August 1997). Not only was it truly great, it also put readers in

an up-close, ringside seat for all the great action of these pay-per-views. Once again, *PWI* has truly proven how great it is with its superb coverage.

ROBERT COFFEY JR.
South Gate, CA

LOSING CONTROL

I think the real reason the New World Order is falling apart is because of two people: "Hollywood" Hogan and Eric Bischoff ("N-W-Over?" September 1997). To put it bluntly, I think they are both egotistical idiots. Hogan is nothing but an overrated, backstabbing, whiny coward. He cares only for himself and has no leadership abilities. As for Bischoff, all he does is ride the NWO's coattails and run his big mouth.

The only person who has the leadership abilities to direct the group is Kevin Nash. Not only does he have great intelligence, he is genuinely concerned about the NWO's welfare and preservation.

It infuriates me that Hogan and Bischoff won't let Nash take control of the group.

What will happen when the NWO gets old for both Hogan and Bischoff? They better either stop thinking about themselves and start living their own motto, "NWO 4 Life," or give control to Nash.

MARTA CRABTREE
Jamestown, TN

SPECIAL DELIVERY

I think *PWI* should send a copy of the October 1997 issue to every executive in the WWF and WCW with a note on it to read the article "Why



Bret Hart has made some nasty comments about American fans recently, but reader Paul Stevenson, who lives in Scotland, thinks a lot of what the "Hitman" has said is true.



New Jack uses a table to bash D-Von Dudley during an ECW tag team match. Reader Cory Garmond is happy to see WWF and WCW wrestlers starting to use a more "extreme" style, too.

to come around to using the hardcore style, which a lot of fans are now clamoring for. Change is what is needed to keep the sport exciting.

CORY GARMOND
Cleveland, OH

BIG MAN FALLING

I just read Andy Rodriguez' "Win, Lose, Or Draw" column (September 1997) about The

The WWF And WCW Should Fear ECW!" Dave Rosenbaum did a great job explaining the phenomenon that so many fans love. What I don't understand is that if the fans, wrestlers, and reporters can understand why this promotion is so successful, why can't the WWF and WCW?

In recent months, the WWF has started to use a more "extreme" style, especially since the ECW guys have been appearing on their shows. But the violent actions of Vader pale in comparison to Rob Van Dam beating on Tommy Dreamer with a wide assortment of weapons.

I am happy that the Big Two are starting

Giant's bout against Big Al, who is formerly known as 911. That match was the most one-sided bout I have ever witnessed at a live wrestling event in Philadelphia. I expected the bout to last much longer than 65 seconds, especially since Big Al was competing in front of many of his ECW fans at the CoreStates Spectrum. But he was simply overwhelmed by the devastating force of The Giant.

While Big Al has built his reputation by defeating many tough opponents with size and intimidation, he never faced anyone bigger and stronger than himself. The

(Continued on page 54)

10 YEARS AGO IN PW!

The cover of the December 1987 issue celebrated the 100th issue of **PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED**. Eight of the most memorable covers from **PWI**'s past were featured, including the very first **PWI** cover, dated September 1979, of Dusty Rhodes and Mil Mascaras.

Elsewhere in the magazine: The special anniversary edition took a look back at the first 100 issues and provided an exclusive behind-the-scenes look at how the magazine is produced ... The editors picked the 10 most influential wrestlers of the **PWI** years, including Hulk Hogan, The Road Warriors, and Roddy Piper ... A special fan poll revealed who readers thought were the best and worst wrestlers, tag teams, as well as the best matches and the greatest events of the **PWI** years. Fans also picked their favorite **PWI** writers and articles.

Magazine availability: Sold out.



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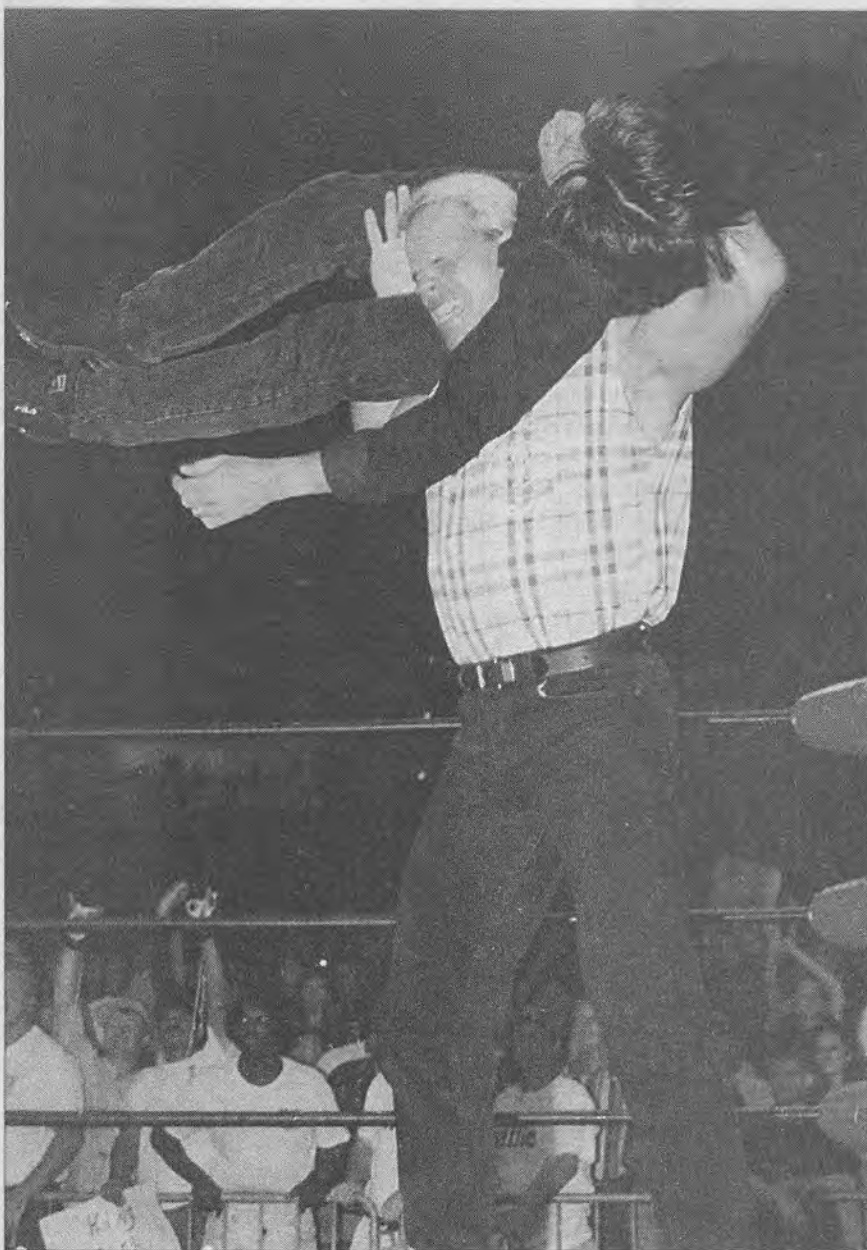
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RING SIDE

With Bill Apter



Lex Luger's "human torture rack" hurt Eric Bischoff a lot in July, but a few minutes after he was released from the hold, he wasn't worried so much about the pain he was feeling. He was angry that Hulk Hogan didn't save him.

BISCHOFF BOILS: If indeed **Eric Bischoff's** survival in the NWO is dependent upon his relationship with **Hulk Hogan**, as **Dave Rosenbaum's** story on page 19 suggests, then Eric has a big problem. The two have not been on the best of terms since July when Hogan did not offer Bischoff any help when **Lex Luger** put him in the "torture rack" during *WCW Monday Nitro*. Hogan was wary of getting attacked by The Giant, who stood by and choke-slammed every NWO member who dared to enter the ring.

Back in the dressing room after the incident, Bischoff, who was being attended to by NWO trainer **Mike Bretsky**, demanded that Hogan be brought to him, but Hogan had already left the arena.

The following day, Bischoff sent a fax to Hogan expressing his displeasure about the events of the previous night.

Hogan called Bischoff back and told him, "Hey, man, it's only a week before me and **Dennis Rodman** get into the ring against Luger and The Giant. Chill out. If I stayed in the ring and got attacked, we might have had to cancel the match, and, man, that isn't something the NWO wants. Eric, you chose to be in the ring, so you have to be willing to put your body on the line just like the rest of us. Most times, I'd be glad to help, but, man, this Rodman thing is just too big to let anything else get in the way."

Within the last few weeks, Hogan told me that the relationship with Bischoff is okay. "He admires me so much, but you can tell there's still a problem on his side," the WCW World champion said. "I don't think he'll ever let this incident go."

I then called Bischoff, and he told me that "what happened is history. 'Hollywood' is the man. Hey, I've got a call from 'Hollywood' on the other line, so I gotta go!" Click. The phone call was over. Bischoff sounded about as sincere as **Mike**



Brian Christopher has always been cocky, but now his arrogance is becoming unbearable. Just weeks after he began competing in WWF light heavyweight matches, he announced that the competition wasn't good enough for him.

Tyson did when he apologized to **Evander Holyfield** for biting off a piece of his ear.

Turn to page 19, read the story, and come back for the rest of my column.

BRIAN BOASTS: After waiting years to get a chance to wrestle in the WWF, **Brian Christopher** says he's not at all impressed by the level of competition there.

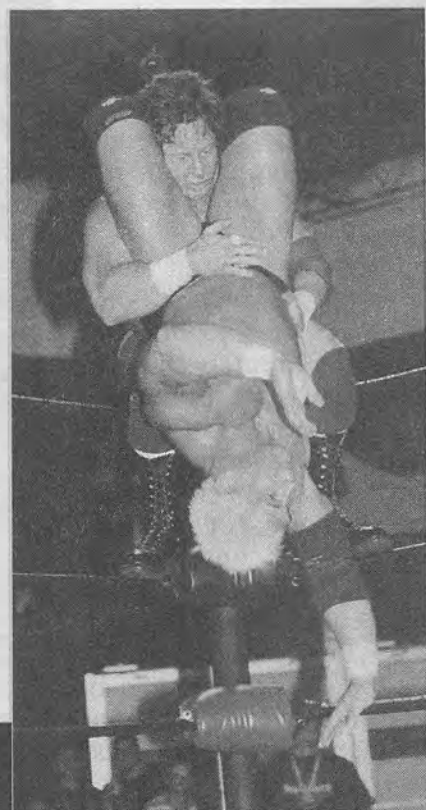
"I thought getting there would be the highlight of my career," Christopher said. "I figured the level of competition in the WWF would push me to a new level. But these guys in their light heavyweight division, **Scott Putski**,

Scott Taylor, **The Great Sasuke**, man, I'll just walk right over every one of them. Hopefully, my presence will push these guys to a new level. At least that way they might have some competitive matches with each other."

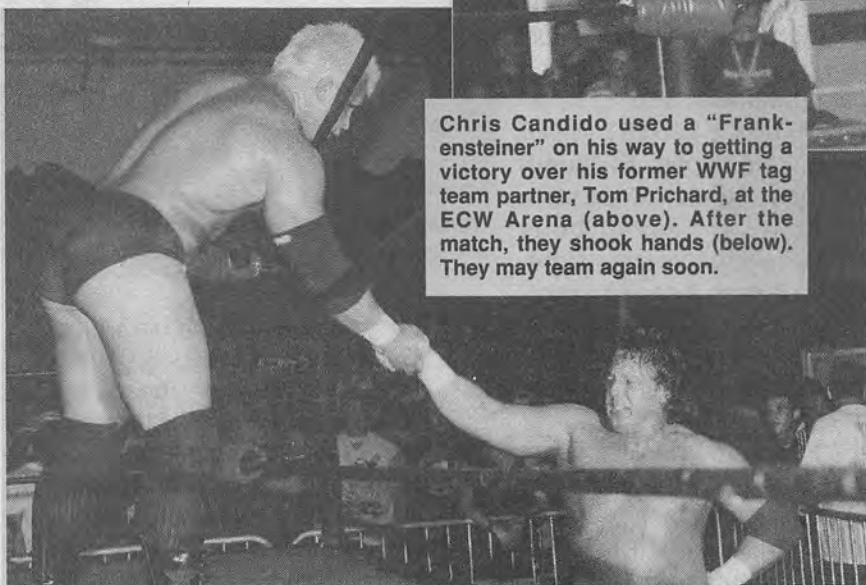
BODYDONNAS PART II?

Chris Candido was shocked when after putting out an open challenge to any WWF wrestler to take him on at the ECW Arena, his former tag team partner in the WWF, **Tom Prichard**, showed up to accept.

Candido and Prichard were



Chris Candido used a "Frankensteiner" on his way to getting a victory over his former WWF tag team partner, Tom Prichard, at the ECW Arena (above). After the match, they shook hands (below). They may team again soon.



WWF World tag team champions last year under the guise of **Skip and Zip, The Bodydonnas**. The match was not as violent as most ECW observers expected it to be, and there didn't seem to be much animosity between the two. Candido wound up winning with a top-rope power bomb, and they shook hands afterward. Later that night, they talked in the dressing room, reminiscing about their championship days, then left the arena together.

What people might be shocked to find out is that less than a week later, one of our correspondents spotted them having dinner with **Sunny** at an exclusive restaurant.

"That was not an official meeting by any means," Sunny said, "so don't go spreading rumors that The Bodydonnas are reuniting."

Candido asked our reporter to leave them alone, while Prichard said to a fan who asked if The Bodydonnas will get together again, "Never say never. It feels so good to be back with these two. I really missed it."

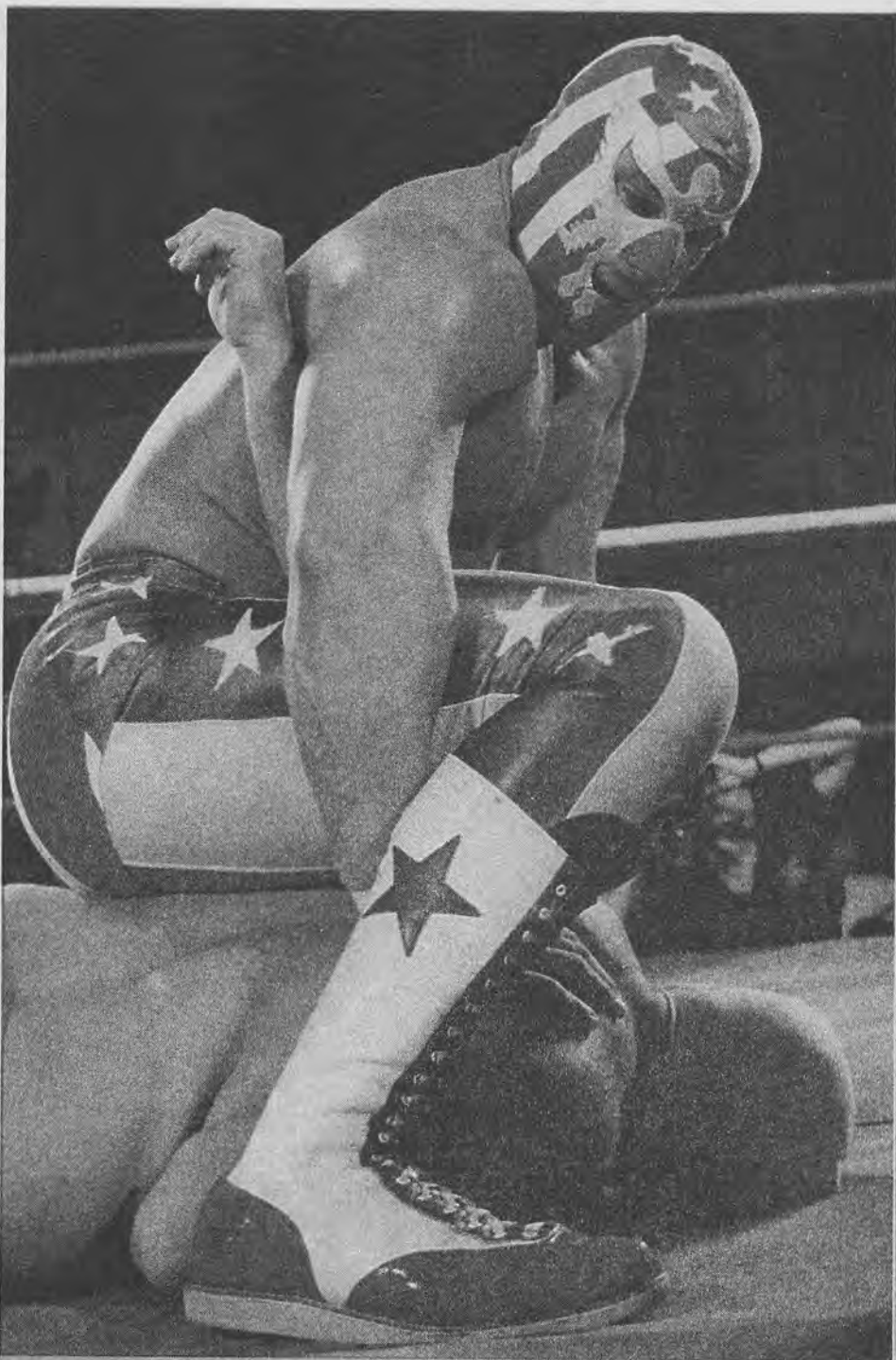
An ECW promoter told me that Prichard is negotiating for more matches, but would not say if he asked to be paired with Candido.

SHORT SLAMS: Major news from Japan: **El Samurai** has defeated **Jushin Liger** to win seven belts (IWGP junior heavyweight, NWA junior heavyweight, WWA junior heavyweight, WWF light heavyweight, Great Britain junior heavyweight, UWA junior heavyweight, and NWA welterweight). Samurai and Liger were tag team partners just a few days before this happened. "We are professionals and can exist as partners or opponents," Liger said. "I

congratulate him on his victory" ... Back here in the U.S., **Bart** and **Brad Batten** have beaten **Beau James** and **Frank Murdoch** for the Championship Pro Wrestling tag team belts ... **Aldo Montoya** is in the USWA minus his mask and minus the name he was using in the WWF (his real name is **P.J.**

Walker). "I got an offer to join **PG-13**, **Wolfie D** and **J.C. Ice**," Walker says. "You can start calling me **P.G. Walker** from now on. I'm on my way to becoming a huge star."

The Patriot has left All-Japan and signed with the WWF. "I feel that I've learned so many different styles in Japan," the masked man



The Patriot has signed with the WWF. He says he learned a lot in Japan the last few years and plans to use the knowledge to become a star in the U.S. again.

Debra and Steve McMichael aren't helping out Jeff Jarrett anymore. That's because he has been kicked out of The Four Horsemen. Jarrett now claims he's glad to be out of the group.

said. "That kind of knowledge will help me greatly in the WWF. Too many guys go to a major U.S. federation without the proper discipline and training. I'm definitely ready for the WWF" ... Canadian Wrestling Federation junior heavyweight champion **Alex Rain** has signed for a series of lumberjack matches against former champion **Mike Myers** ... Empire Wrestling Alliance heavyweight champion **Dr. Hurtz** recently defended his title against veteran "**Iron**" **Mike Sharpe**, and he came away impressed. "Yeah, I thought the match would be a breeze," Hurtz said, "but the old guy still has a lot of fight left in him."

HORSEMEN HELL: Jeff Jarrett was very upset when he was thrown out of **The Four Horsemen** in June, but now he tells me that he had time to think carefully about what happened and is *glad* he was ousted.

"Being with those guys was like living in hell," he said. "I guess I was just so thrilled about being asked to join a group with such a great tradition that I never realized how bad things really were with them. You would figure that with **Ric Flair** running the show, there would be some structure to what they're doing, but that ain't true.

"They have no strategy sessions before big matches, and I can't tell you how many times I asked **Steve** and **Debra McMichael** to leave that damn steel briefcase in the dressing room. Every time we were on our way to winning, that briefcase worked against us. I guess them attacking me was the best thing that ever happened to me in WCW. I'm glad to be out of that disorganized mess."

That's all for now. I'll see you at ringside!



BACK ISSUES OF PRO

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November 1984: Sgt. Slaughter: "I Pledge Allegiance To The Fans!" Centerfold: Rick Martel. Plus: Superstar Graham, Road Warriors, Kerry Von Erich, Windham & Rotundo-Mosca & Slater.

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October 1985: Instant Stardom: Rick Steamboat Makes It Big In The WWF. Centerfold: Chris Adams. Plus: Road Warriors, Bruiser Brody, Nikita Koloff.

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December 1988: The Four Horsemen's Revolving Door—Who's The Next To Go? Centerfold: Hacksaw Duggan. Plus: Jerry Lawler, Precious, Bam Bam

Bigelow, Bruiser Brody, Intercontinental tag title.

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February 1990: Luger's Holiday Gift For Flair: Has The "Total Package" Wrapped Up The NWA Title? Centerfold: Bret Hart. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Woman, Hennig-Beefcake, Toni Adams.

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December 1990: New Blood—And Bad Blood—In The WWF. Centerfold: Sting. Plus: Four Horsemen, Kerry Von Erich, Doom, Eddie Gilbert, Sgt. Slaughter.

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July 1991: The War Is Over! Hulk Hogan Liberates The WWF Belt From Sgt. Slaughter! Centerfold: Brian Pillman. Plus: Horsemen, Lex Luger, Eric Embry, Demolition.

August 1991 (Special Issue): Supercards '91. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: WrestleMania VII, WCW-New Japan, Ultimate Warrior, Owen Hart, Koloff-Luger.

October 1991: Sid Justice: The Second Coming Of Hulk Hogan. Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Hogan-Slaughter, Terrence Taylor, Barry Windham, Williams-Bigelow.

November 1991: Your Wedding Gift For Savage & Elizabeth: Help Lift The "Macho Man's" Suspension! Centerfold: Bobby Eaton. Plus: Tito Santana, Bushwhackers, Jushin Liger, Brian Pillman.

December 1991: PWI 500. Centerfold: Rick Steamboat. Plus: Ron Simmons, Johnny B. Badd, Flair-Hogan.

January 1992: Ric Flair: He'll Make Hulk Hogan Look Like An Amateur. Centerfold: Ron Simmons. Plus: Rick Steiner, Ultimate Warrior, Lex Luger.

February 1992: Has Hulk Hogan Had Enough? Centerfold: 1992 calendar. Plus: Sting, Justice-Roberts, hot prospects, Eddie Gilbert.

March 1992 (Special Issue): 1991—The Year In Wrestling. 1991 In Review, Achievement '91 awards, Unofficial/Official awards, Predictions for 1992.

April 1992: Outlook For Sting: Bright And Sunny; Forecast For Luger: Reign Ending! Centerfold: Ric Flair. Plus: Eaton & Anderson, Madusa, Jannetty-Michaels, WWF madness.

May 1992: Revitalized In Tokyo: Hulk Hogan Is Super-Psyched For WrestleMania VIII! Centerfold: Rick Rude. Plus: Sting & Muta-Steiners, Jarrett & Fuller, Lightning Kid, Randy Savage, intimidation.

June 1992: Exclusive PWI Interview: Roddy Piper Speaks Out! Centerfold: Dustin Rhodes. Plus: Dangerously-Sting, Abdullah-Cactus, Sid Justice, Randy Savage.

July 1992: The Best Of The Best—The Masters Of Their Craft. Centerfold: Randy Savage. Plus: Liger-Pillman, Jim Neidhart, U.S.-Japan, Ric Flair.

August 1992 (Special Issue): WrestleMania VIII. Centerfold: Hulk Hogan. Plus: Ultimate Warrior, Randy Savage, Sting, Terry Taylor, Gilbert-Patriot, gore.

September 1992: Savage vs. Sting: Why It Isn't That Unlikely. Centerfold: Nikita Koloff. Plus: Steiners, Barry Windham, Sid Justice, Hodge & Weston, Shawn Michaels.

October 1992: The Hatred Still Runs Deep: Ultimate Warrior vs. Randy Savage—They'll Settle Up At SummerSlam! Centerfold: Cactus Jack. Plus: Steve

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January 1993: New WWF World Champion Ric Flair: His SummerSlam Plan Works To Perfection. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Ron Simmons, Kerry Von Erich, Rude-Roberts-Steamboat.

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August 1993 (Special Issue): Supercards '93. Centerfold: Shawn Michaels. Plus: WCW in Manhattan, WrestleMania IX, Van Hammer, Missy Hyatt, Tony Anthony, Luger & Hughes, 1993 PWI Poll.

June 1994 (Special Issue): Sting vs. Hogan: Yes! And We Have The Photos! Centerfold: Alundra Blayze. Plus: 1994 PWI Poll, Undertaker, Nick Bockwinkel, light heavyweights, Dustin Rhodes, mega-groups.

Winter 1994: Hulkamania Runs Wild Again! Centerfold: Terry Funk. Plus: Vince McMahon, Sid Vicious, AAA, Ric Flair. **April 1995: WWF Title Turmoil.** Centerfold: Sabu. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Jim Cornette, Diesel, Alundra Blayze, Dusty-Dustin, Chris Candido.

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July 1995: Hulk Hogan: "I Can't Take It Anymore!" Centerfold: Bam Bam Bigelow. Plus: Kevin Sullivan, USWA blood, Yokozuna, Savage & Sheri, revitalize the WWF.

April 1996: WCW World Title Turmoil. Centerfold: The Kid. Plus: Hulk Hogan, Ahmed Johnson, Bob Armstrong, Michaels-Bret, Public Enemy.



May 1996: Un-Natural! The WWF Has Finally Gone Too Far! Centerfold: Public Enemy. Plus: Jeff Jarrett, Dreamer-Raven, Dan Severn, Ric Flair, Giant.

June 1996 (Special Issue): The 1996 PWI Poll. Centerfold: Jeff Jarrett. Plus: Yokozuna, Sunny, Hulk Hogan, Sting & Luger, Bret Hart, WWF-WCW.

July 1996: Is Shawn Michaels Leaving The WWF? Centerfold: Lex Luger. Plus: Goldust, Hulk Hogan, Giant, Ric Flair.

August 1996 (Special Issue): WrestleMania XII. Centerfold: Sunny. Plus: Shawn Michaels, 1-2-3 Kid, Jimmy Hart, Sting-Flair, Sandman & Hyatt, Steve Austin.

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Centerfold: Ultimate Warrior. Plus: Roddy Piper, Jerry Lawler, Steiners-Road Warriors, Public Enemy.

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December 1996: The Truth Hurts: Hulk Hogan Is Right! Centerfold: Steve Austin. Plus: Undertaker-Bearer-Mankind, Sting, Ahmed Johnson, Col. Parker.

Winter 1996 (Special Issue): PWI 500. Centerfold: Shawn Michaels.

January 1997: The NWO's Confidential Dream Roster. Centerfold: Rey Mysterio Jr. Plus: Marc Mero, Lord Steven Regal, Shawn Michaels, PG-13.

February 1997: Mr. Perfect: "Shawn Michaels Stole My Life." Centerfold: "Psycho" Sid. Plus: Kroat & Fumas, Vince McMahon, Randy Savage, New Razor & New Diesel.

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June 1997 (Special Issue): The 1997 PWI Poll. Centerfold: Ahmed Johnson. Plus: Bearer & Vader, Savio Vega, Piper-Hogan, Barely Legal, Malenko-Dragon.

July 1997: Steve Austin: Stone-Cold And Uncensored. Centerfold: Dallas Page. Plus: Rocky Maivia, Road Warriors, Nick Patrick, Eliminators.

August 1997: (Special Issue): Supercards '97: WCW Uncensored, WWF WrestleMania XIII, ECW Barely Legal. Centerfold: Dennis Rodman & Hulk Hogan vs. Lex Luger. Plus: Kimberly, Public Enemy, managers.

September 1997: N-W-Over? Centerfold: Bret Hart. Plus: Piper & Flair, Terry Funk, WWF World title, Steve Austin.

October 1997: Shawn Michaels: Is His Heart Still In The WWF? Centerfold: The Giant. Plus: Ultimo Dragon, Kevin Nash, Big Van Vader, ECW.

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FROM THE DESK OF...

Stuart M. Saks

DR. SAL CORSO knew Perry Saturn had taken his first solid stride toward full recovery from reconstructive knee surgery after he informed his patient that the remaining scar would be uglier than he had anticipated. "Just get me back in the ring, Doc," Saturn said. "Let the pretty boys worry about their scars."

Dr. Corso had done his job, transplanting a ligament from Saturn's patella tendon and weaving it through the wrestler's left knee to replace the torn anterior cruciate ligament. The rest was up to Saturn. He'd have to learn to handle pain that is so intense that it would leave him wondering if surgery may have indeed worsened the condition of the knee. He'd have to deal with the possibility of never being the same athlete he was before the injury, the prospect of being out of work for as long as a year, the chance that fans and promoters would forget about him while he was gone.

There's physical pain and there's mental pain. Perry Saturn has gone through a great deal of both in his life. But now he was moving into unexplored territory. At least for him. To be sure, Saturn isn't the only athlete to have gone through this ordeal. The torn

ACL has become the sports injury of the '90s. The problem is simple. As athletes evolve to become faster and more agile, the athletes' bodies

remain largely unchanged. The knee is the most vulnerable of all body parts, and a torn ACL is the worst of all knee injuries.



Dr. Sal Corso helps wheel Perry Saturn into an operating room where he would perform surgery to repair his damaged left knee. He says Saturn could be back wrestling as soon as six months after the surgery.

Dr. Corso is not a big wrestling fan, but he channel-flips and sees enough of the sport to know the danger signs. "Any time you have a situation where guys are coming off the ropes and jumping out of the ring, there is an increased risk [of serious knee injuries]," he said. "Any situation where the leg is planted and the body is moving in a different direction will place undue torque on the knee. The more violent and wild action will cause more problems."

"But," he added, "that's just the nature of the business in an uncontrolled environment."

Saturn can tell you a thing or two about uncontrolled environments. He, after all, is one of the marquee names in Extreme Championship Wrestling, where a wrestler can end up on crutches by turning his knee on a crutch that was brought into the ring during a three-way tag team match by a wrestler who wasn't even part of the match.

Not every federation is like ECW, mind you. But don't be misled into thinking any one federation is safer than the next. Wrestlers, like their counterparts in other professional sports, grow increasingly more athletic and are able and willing to perform more spectacular, riskier moves than ever before. Perry Saturn has just as good a chance of blowing out a knee as the WWF's Marc Mero or the NWA's Inferno Kid. All are dues-paying members of the ACLU (Anterior Cruciate Ligament Union). The bar has been raised throughout the sport and fans come to matches expecting the athletes to be able to jump over it. Sometimes the landing is dangerous. Sometimes you land on a crutch.

Beginning this issue, PRO WRES-

TLING ILLUSTRATED will closely follow Saturn in his grueling effort to get back to the sport he loves. Senior Writer Bryan Ethier has uncovered more about this gifted athlete than even Dr. Corso, who did his thing well below the skin surface. Part one of this occasional series takes you in words and pictures back to the hospital in Long Island, New York, where the operation was performed and, a week earlier, to the ECW Arena in Philadelphia, where in a courageous but ill-advised act, Saturn, his leg in a splint, leaped from the top rope to help Kronus beat the Dudleys in an ECW tag team title defense. But the Perry Saturn story actually traces back even years earlier to his troubled youth, explaining why the competitive fires burn so hot within him and why all agree he'll be back one day to continue his brilliant career.

In future installments of the series, we'll examine Saturn's psyche as he undergoes the arduous rehabilitation process, and in the future, we'll cover his happy return. While that time may pass quickly for us, it won't for Saturn. There is much hard work ahead, much pain. There will be times when his resolve will be severely tested, but he'll not only get through it, he may get through it a lot faster than most people expect.

"We're usually looking at eight months to a year," Dr. Corso said. "Because of Perry's conditioning, particularly in his legs, there's a good possibility of six months. He's very optimistic. Very cooperative. Follows orders. His therapist says he works



Saturn's left knee didn't look too healthy three days before the surgery. But even though it was badly swollen, Saturn still performed a top-rope elbowdrop that night. Now he can't wait to compete again.

very hard. He's a very well-motivated guy."

A guy who, understandably, has asked himself on more than one occasion, "Why me? Why did this happen when I was just beginning to make my mark on this sport?"

He may never know the answer to that question. But somewhere, some other wrestler, or even a non-wrestler, will read in *PWI* about the inner strength and determination of Perry Saturn and will be inspired to make it through a similar injury. And someday Saturn will be back into his regular routine and The Eliminators will be champs again and Perry will receive a thank you note from this person. And he'll smile. And then maybe he'll understand. □

focus

WCW broadcaster Lee Marshall recently shared with me a letter he received from a man by the name of Bailey Guy, a wrestling fan since the heyday of AWA legend Verne Gagne. Marshall never realized he had so much influence on the youth of America. A few excerpts from the letter:

For the past dozen years, I've been teaching print and broadcast journalism, as well as creative writing, on

the junior college and university level. Because our words paint pictures, I have always encouraged my students to find someone who appeals to them and study the way this person uses words to bring a story to life.

Recently, one of my students turned the tables on me and asked who I considered to be a good example and model for creative, descriptive broadcasting. The first name to come to my mind was Lee Marshall. I told this to my students and asked them to listen to you speak. Without exception, they all came back and agreed that you truly have a master's stroke when painting a picture with words ... Thanks for many hours of entertainment and thanks for giving my students a contemporary example of creative broadcast journalism.

Mr. Guy even went so far as to write down a few of his favorite colorful Marshallisms. For instance ...

Of Bobby Eaton: "Recently, he's been on the canvas more than Picasso."

Of Rey Misterio Jr.: "He's got more moves than a U-Haul."

Of Public Enemy: "They use more tables than the banquet room at the Hilton."

Of Hugh Morris: "He's harder to read than a Chinese newspaper."

Of Jimmy Hart: "The last person dressed like that was Thurston Howell III."

Of The Gambler: "Even Bob Dole had a better year."



Dusty Rhodes probably never realized that Lee Marshall, one of his broadcasting colleagues, had so much influence on young people. A college professor has been paying attention to what Marshall says.

Of Eddy Guerrero: "He had a better December than Tickle Me Elmo."

Of Sister Sherri: "She has a voice like a toothache."

Of Harlem Heat: "Not exactly Wally and the Beaver."

Of Dean Malenko: "That hold is harder to remove than a tattoo."

Of Lex Luger: "He's done more pushups than a Wonder Bra."

So if any institution of higher learning out there is considering offering a Wrestling Broadcasting 101 course to its students, I'd recommend getting Prof. Marshall to teach it. Until that happens, Lee, keep those great lines coming. The great broadcasters of tomorrow could be listening very closely.

WHO'S THE MAN WHO'S IN?

Two years ago, the choice was obvious. Diesel was our man. A year ago, it came down to two men: Shawn Michaels and The Giant. Michaels won in a split decision. This year, the finalists are ... well, we know we're in trouble when we have a hard time just identifying the finalists for the number-one slot in the "PWI 500."

As I write this, those of us on the editorial staff of *PWI* are about a month away from barricading ourselves in a conference room and dealing with that annual task (torture?) of ranking the top 500 wrestlers in the world (Should be fun—Bill Apter still insists that Battle Monkey deserved to be ranked ahead of The Cat Burglar in last year's "PWI 500"). This will be the fifth "500" in which I've been involved, and this is the first time that just 30 days before deadline, I've had absolutely no idea who number one would be.

The first two men we always look at for the top spot are the world heavyweight champions of WCW and the WWF. Hulk Hogan? Lost non-title matches to Roddy Piper, Jacques Rougeau, and Lex Luger. Hasn't defended the belt since February. He'd be lucky to make the top 20.

The Undertaker. Dominant since winning the WWF belt at WrestleMania XIII, but didn't accomplish much in the months leading up to that event. Hardly the greatest athlete in the WWF, either, but maybe number one by default.

Secondary champions in the Big Two? There hasn't been a dominant WCW U.S. or WWF Intercontinental champ in the last 12 months. ECW champ Terry Funk? Courageous warrior, but not the best wrestler in the world. USWA champ Jerry Lawler? Don't think so.

Many of you who posted messages on our *PWI* Online folder on America Online have suggested Dallas Page. Interesting choice. DDP has improved so much over the last few years, and he has dominated his feud with Randy Savage, but Page hasn't really gone after any title in WCW since he lost to Eddy Guerrero in the finals of the U.S. title tournament at Starrcade.

Other favorites are Lex Luger, Shawn Michaels, The



Will we have to look to Japan to find the number-one man for the 1997 "PWI 500"? No American-based wrestler is standing out as a clear-cut choice. All-Japan Triple Crown champ Mitsuharu Misawa might be our man.

Giant, Bret Hart, and Steve Austin. Luger has had a very good year, but much of it has been in tag teams. Michaels won two WWF titles in the last 12 months, but he also spent a lot of time nursing injuries. The Giant had his chances to regain the WCW World title late in '96 and early in '97 and couldn't take advantage of them. Then he found out Luger makes a good tag team partner. Hart held the WWF championship for all of 24 hours and suffered through knee and wrist injuries. Austin is a hero to many in America, but he lost twice to Bret on pay-per-view and at least a half-dozen times to "Taker.

All-Japan Triple Crown champ Mitsuharu Misawa? IWGP heavyweight champ Shinya Hashimoto? Maybe. Maybe. Even Taz' name has been thrown out there by a few ECW diehards.

This isn't going to be easy, but I suppose Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz, who again is faced with the task of coordinating this massive project, put it best when she said as she opened another envelope full of bios sent by a promoter somewhere in the Smoky Mountains in Tennessee, "I'm not spending a lot of time thinking about who's going to be number one. I have numbers two through 500 to worry about!"

Talk to you next month ... if I ever get out of that conference room. □



If you wish to
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Brandi's mailbag,
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(Editor's note: The opinions expressed in this column are those of the letter writers and Brandi Mankiewicz herself. They do not necessarily reflect the editorial views of this magazine.)

JUST WHEN YOU thought the WWF was building a foundation of reality with Mankind and Goldust baring their respective souls, another episode of *As The Mortuary Burns* airs. A sordid tale of blackmail, murder, and fake deaths. Didn't Dallas dream all this kind of garbage away years ago?

All we wanted was a little stability for the WWF World title. But Paul Bearer's macabre tattle tale of The Undertaker with the candlestick in the study is too much for me to take. Time for a wrestler to hold the WWF title, not Norman Bates dressed in leather and covered in tattoos. But it's getting hard to find wrestlers who haven't already been champion. What's Barry Horowitz doing these days?

But no matter how heated it may get in Mommy and Daddy's funeral parlor, is there anyone more smokin' than me? For I am your champion.

Hail Queen Brandi:

I present to you the top 10 reasons why Dennis Rodman got into professional wrestling:

10. He needed extra cash so he could kick more photographers in the groin and pay off the fines.

9. Since he was suspended for

almost every Bulls game, he wanted to play in a sport.

8. He finally found a place where he could wear silly outfits and still fit in.

7. Free fashion tips from Elizabeth.

6. Hoping to get discount on subscription to *Playboy* from Kimberly.

5. Hoping to get discount on subscription to *Playgirl* from Shawn Michaels.

4. He wanted to use the pickup line, "Hey, baby, wanna wrestle?"

3. He took the term tag team the wrong way.

2. He wanted to make Goldust look normal.

1. He wanted to start pregame pep talks with, "Ya know what, brother?"

ANDY FLEMING &
FRANK HARVEY
Memphis, TN
ARYN MILLER
Naples, FL

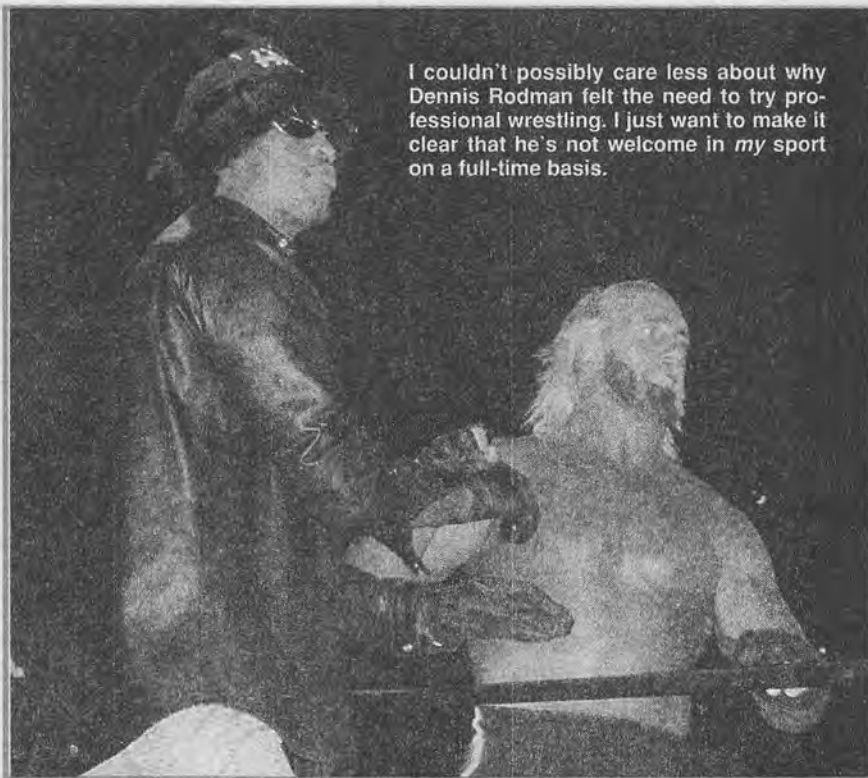
Dear Andy, Frank, and Aryn:

Your attempt at comedy is noted. Nice imitation of Steve Anderson doing his best David Letterman. Never thought anyone would want to emulate our cartoonist/columnist. That's a scary thought. Imitations of me require the best plastic surgery that money can buy, boys.

Dear Brandi:

Roddy Piper's relationship with Ric Flair has always been strange. I guess it began on January 27, 1981, when Piper beat Flair for the U.S. heavyweight championship (although it seems that I remember Piper and Flair holding the U.S. tag team belts in the late-'70s) and has continued for over 15 years in two federations. All the way up to today, which leads me to a simple question: Why? What are we going to see this time that we haven't seen before?

RICHARD UPRIGHT
China Grove, NC



I couldn't possibly care less about why Dennis Rodman felt the need to try professional wrestling. I just want to make it clear that he's not welcome in my sport on a full-time basis.



This is a picture of Ric Flair and Roddy Piper when they were feuding in 1981. You'd think that 16 years later, they'd be sick of beating each other up. I know I'm sick of watching them do it.

Dear Richard:

These two have been beating each other up longer than most fans have been alive. With a cumulative age approaching 90, Piper and Flair can't offer us much of anything that we haven't already seen from them. Maybe a "winner-gets-loser's-Social Security" match? Or "loser-goes-without-Metamucil-for-a-day"? I only hope that they won't start wearing black socks and white shoes with their wrestling attire. As far as your encyclopedic knowledge of wrestling, might I suggest a quality dating service?

Dear Brandi:

I have two questions that the world, along with me, would like to know: Is Shawn Michaels really leaving—say it ain't so—and is there any chance that Doink the Clown will ever come back?

DAVE DELFARNO
Smithfield, RI

Dear Dave:

Putting the names of Yawn Michaels and Doink in one sentence is somehow fitting. "Bozo Boy Toy" longs too much for the spotlight. He'll never really leave. He can't and won't stay away for more than a few months at a time. He and his smile will soon be nauseating an

arena near you. As far as Doink coming back, I'm not sure if I don't care or I just don't care. I know when it comes to Michaels, I really don't care.

Dear Queen Brandi:

I am really tired of the WCW announcers. Every time the NWO confronts Sting, the announcers say how afraid the NWO is. The thing is, Sting has a metal bat! I wouldn't run toward a guy with a metal bat; that's just plain stupid. The NWO is cautious whenever Sting is swinging his bat, but the WCW announcers say the NWO is scared. The NWO isn't scared; they're smart. Sting isn't brave and strong; he's scared and hides behind a bat.

MIKE FERRARELLA
Maspeth, NY

Dear Mike:

Like Pavlov's dog, WCW announcers do what they're told and drool like Niagara Falls when Marcel Marceau drops from the heavens. They recite the promotion's propaganda, chapter and verse. I agree. Sting's a bad boy with his big bat. But consider the fact that he hasn't wrestled for almost one year. He needs all the help he can get. Don't fault the announcers for their blather. They know little of what they do.

Brandi:

What did you think of the match between "Hollywood" Hulk Hogan and



What's this wrestling world coming to when people start to wonder when Doink will be coming back? Yeah, that's just what the WWF needs to boost those Monday night ratings.

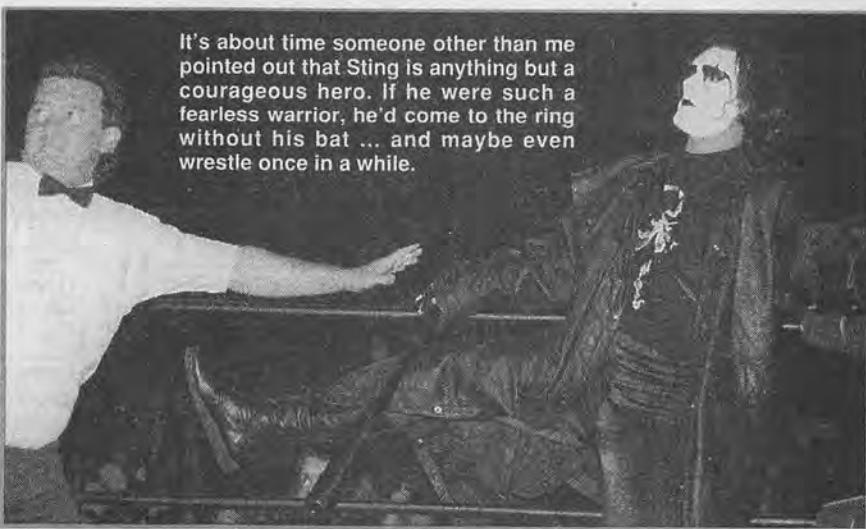
Jacques Rougeau? My wife and I were in the arena, and I was quite surprised to see Rougeau pull out a win after Hogan beat the daylights out of him.

BRIAN KANFER

Lancaster Township, Ontario

Dear Brian:

Ah, yes. Time for yet another postage due crayon scrawl from our unwelcome neighbor. Well, dear Brian, in the Great Witless North, you'd define dumb luck as Rougeau pinning Hulk Hogan. But here in the U.S.A., we define dumb luck as Bret Hart's career success. □



It's about time someone other than me pointed out that Sting is anything but a courageous hero. If he were such a fearless warrior, he'd come to the ring without his bat ... and maybe even wrestle once in a while.

TAKE US ON!



#1: Big Ben



#2: Ace Stevens



#3: Jaeger van Dorn



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12. CHICKEN WING
13. CHOKE
14. CLAW
15. CLOTHESLINE
16. CROSS BODY BLOCK
17. DOUBLE AXEHANDLE
18. DROP KICK
19. EAGLE SPLIT
20. ELBOW SMASH
21. EYE GOUGE
22. FACE RAKE
23. FIREMAN'S CARRY RAM
24. FLYING BODY PRESS
25. FLYING CLOTHESLINE
26. FLYING DROP KICK
27. FLYING ELBOW DROP
28. FLYING HEAD BUTT
29. FLYING MARE
30. FOREARM SMASH
31. FOREIGN OBJECT
32. FULL NELSON
33. GIANT SWING
34. GRAPEVINE
35. HAIR PULLING
36. HAMMERLOCK
37. HEAD LOCK
38. HEAD STOMP
39. HEART PUNCH
40. HIP ROLL
41. IRISH WHIP
42. KNEE DROP
43. LEGLOCK
44. MANAGER INTERFERENCE
45. MONKEY FLIP
46. OVERHEAD TOSS
47. POLE RAM
48. REVERSE CHINLOCK
49. ROLLING SCISSORS
50. ROPE BURN
51. SAVATE KICK
52. SCISSORS GRIP
53. SHOULDER BREAKER
54. SLINGSHOT
55. SNAP MARE
56. STEP-OVER TOE HOLD
57. SUPLEX
58. SURFBOARD
59. TURNBUCKLE SMASH
60. WRISTLOCK

SET-UP HOLDS

61. ABDOMINAL STRETCH
62. ATOMIC DROP
63. AVALANCHE
64. BACKBREAKER
65. BACKROLL PRESS
66. BELLY TO BELLY
67. BIG SPLASH
68. BOSTON CRAB
69. BRAIN BUSTER
70. BULLDOG
71. CAMEL CLUTCH
72. COBRA CLUTCH
73. CRADLE
74. CRUCIFIX
75. DDT
76. FIGURE FOUR
77. FLYING LEG DROP
78. GOURD BUSTER
79. INDIAN DEATH LOCK
80. NECKBREAKER
81. PILEDRIIVER
82. POWER BOMB
83. POWER SLAM
84. RUSSIAN SICKLE
85. SLEEPER
86. SLINGSHOT SUPLEX
87. SMALL PACKAGE
88. SPINE BUSTER
89. SUNSET FLIP
90. SUPERPLEX

NAME (PLEASE PRINT) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

WRESTLER'S NAME (NO ACTUAL PRO WRESTLER NAMES, PLEASE) _____

WRESTLER'S HEIGHT _____

WRESTLER'S WEIGHT _____

SPECIAL GIMMICK OR DESCRIPTION OF WRESTLER _____

MANAGER'S NAME (IF NOT YOU) _____

Wear-Down Holds: Choose 10 from the list of 60 shown at left. List them in the order to be used. Use each hold only once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____
6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

Set-Up Holds: Choose 5 from the list of 30 shown at right. List them in the order to be used. Use each hold only once.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

Finishing Hold: Create your custom final maneuver or choose a hold from the 90 shown. Limit the length to 20 letters and spaces.

FINISHING HOLD _____

Opponents: Check the numbers of the men you want your wrestler to go against from the 10 at the top. Remember to enclose **\$1⁹⁹** for each.

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____ 10 _____

THE NWO IS READY TO DUMP BISCHOFF!

Eric Bischoff had his say when he was senior vice president of WCW. But now that his power in WCW is completely gone, his power in the NWO is endangered, too

By Dave Rosenbaum

FLASHBACK, APRIL 21, 1997: In a surprise announcement, James J. Dillon, former manager of The Four Horsemen, is named chairman of the WCW Executive Committee. Speaking for the first time in his new role, Dillon says that he been given the authority to relieve Bischoff of his power and would act quickly to establish control over WCW's internal threat, the New World Order. "I feel that my added presence will force Bischoff and his gang to play by the rules of WCW," he says. Asked how much influence Bischoff now has in WCW, Dillon responds, "None whatsoever." Asked about this development, Bischoff's only response is, "We'll see."

The emperor has no clothes. He can dress up in his designer jeans, wear those expensive shirts,

not shave for a month, and waltz around like he runs the joint. But the emperor has no clothes. Fact is, he isn't even the emperor anymore. He is a man without a throne.

Much of the power of the New World Order could be attributed to Eric Bischoff's influence. While running the NWO, he was also senior vice president of WCW and had a say in all federation decisions. He could strip non-NWO members of their titles. He could award title shots to NWO members. He could play by the rules or not play by the rules, because he was setting the rules. Bischoff was the man with the power, and he enabled the NWO to grow rapidly.

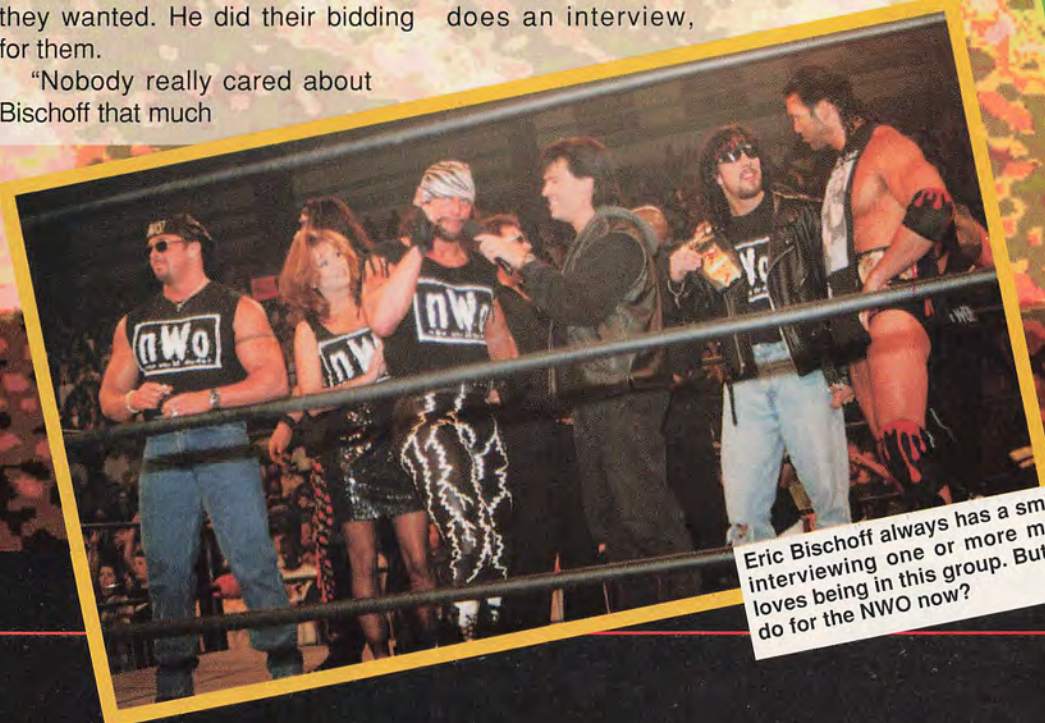
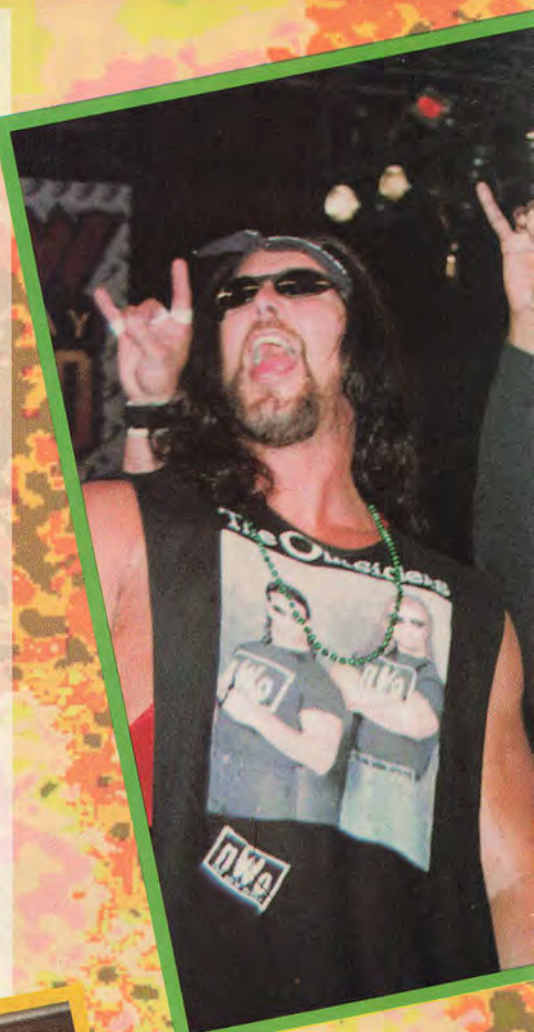
The truth was that, for all of those months when the NWO exercised so much power that it even ran its own pay-per-view event (NWO Souled Out) and protected World champion Hulk Hogan, Bischoff was tolerated and respected by NWO members mostly because he had the power. They needed him. He had something they wanted. He did their bidding for them.

"Nobody really cared about Bischoff that much

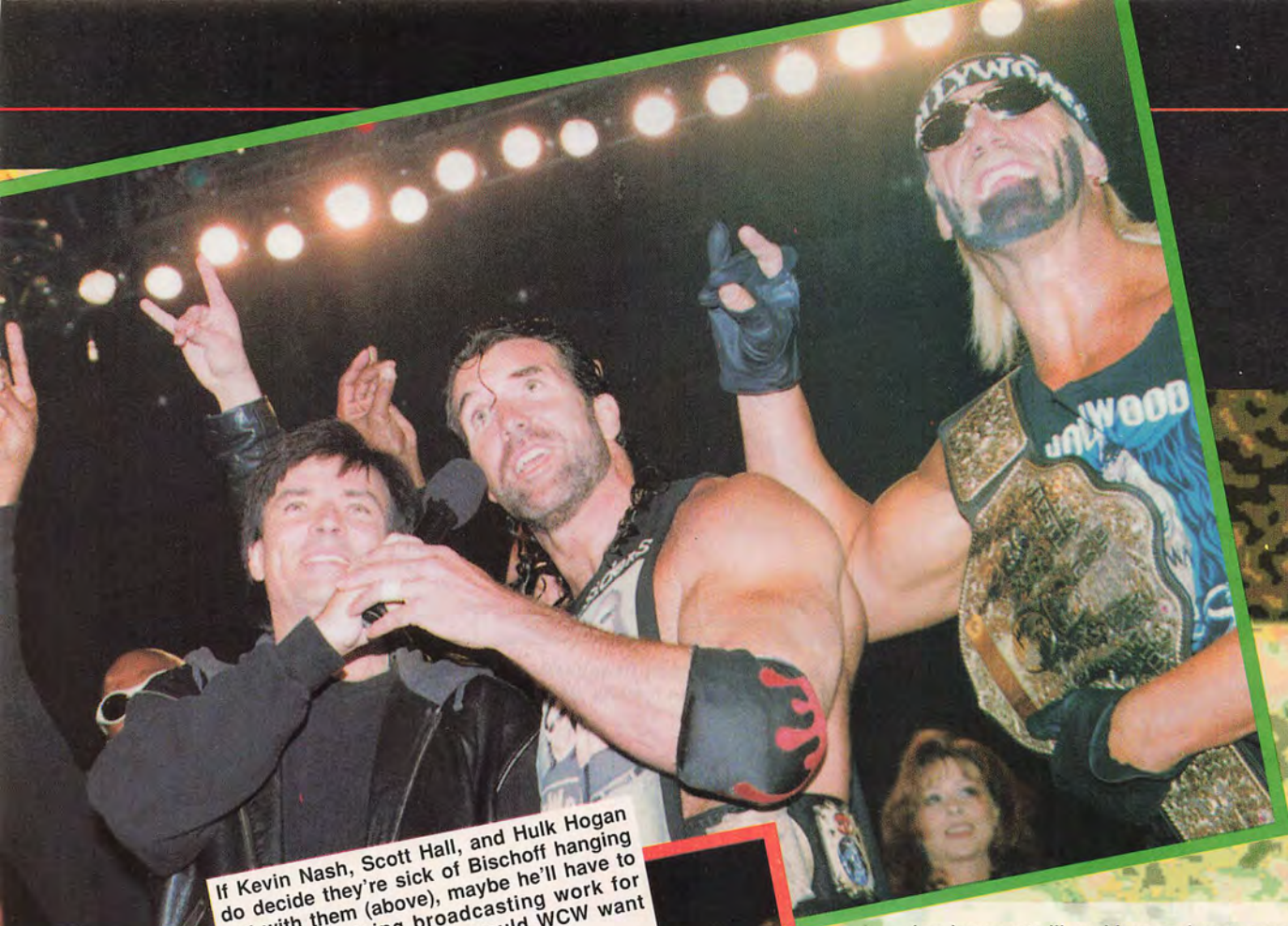
personally," said an NWO member who demanded anonymity. "We put up with a lot of his garbage because of what he could do for us. But like him? Not really. We used him. We tolerated his ego, even though he'd never wrestled a match in his life. Most of us just couldn't stand the way he always had to be in the middle of everything he did. I wouldn't have minded if he ran our operation secretly and never told anyone he was with us."

Now, as PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED has learned, Bischoff's standing with the group is on shaky ground. His power in WCW is gone. His power in the NWO is diminishing.

"Hogan likes him, and that's the only thing that's keeping him around," the NWO member said. "Most of us would like to kick his butt and leave him in a dumpster somewhere. A few guys have already threatened to rearrange his nose if he doesn't keep butting it in our business. But Hogan likes him because Bischoff knows how to suck up to him. Every time he does an interview,



Eric Bischoff always has a smile on his face when he's interviewing one or more members of the NWO. He loves being in this group. But how much does he really do for the NWO now?



If Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, and Hulk Hogan do decide they're sick of Bischoff hanging out with them (above), maybe he'll have to go back to doing broadcasting work for WCW (below). But why would WCW want him back?



he keeps telling Hogan how great he is, and Hogan just eats that up."

But Hogan, though the most famous member of the NWO, doesn't have the final say in the organization's decisions. Kevin Nash and Scott Hall both have significant power. According to our sources, several members of the NWO's international contingent don't completely trust Hogan and have little respect for his wrestling ability. Several NWO members see Bischoff as an unnecessary distraction, a drag on the organization's resources.

"Why should he be getting our money?" another NWO member said. "What's he ever done for any of us, other than shout into his microphone?"

Publicly, for the record, no NWO member will criticize Bischoff. They thrive on their image as a solid unit with no internal dissension. Hogan insisted that, "Eric will be a member of the NWO for as

(Continued on page 56)



Eddy Guerrero ties up his long-time rival Dean Malenko, the man who beat him for the U.S. title in March. He once respected Malenko, but now he just hates him. The feeling is mutual.

EDDY GUERRERO

WHO IS THE real Eddy Guerrero? Friends and family have been asking that very question a lot lately. Is he the well-mannered, high-flying star who has thrilled fans in WCW and ECW? Or is he an ill-mannered thug who now terrorizes the same WCW rings in which he used to display his scientific wares?

Some say we're now seeing a new Eddy Guerrero, but those who have followed his career all along know the **new** Eddy Guerrero is really the **old** Guerrero. Before he joined ECW in 1994, Guerrero, along with the late Art Barr, formed one of the most hated tag teams in Mexican wrestling history: Los Gringos.

But Guerrero was hardly vicious when he got to ECW. He wanted U.S. fans to appreciate his considerable skills. ECW, and eventually WCW, fans were amazed by his repertoire of high-risk moves and the sportsmanship he always showed.

But as is the case with most fan favorites, he became frustrated when things didn't go his way. Dean Malenko blamed him for his loss of the cruiserweight belt to Syxx at SuperBrawl (Guerrero tried to stop Syxx from using as a weapon the cruiserweight belt, which ultimately knocked out Malenko) and challenged him to a match for Guerrero's U.S. belt at Uncensored. Malenko won that, and Guerrero separated his shoulder. As he watched the action for a few months, he grew angry. Then, fully healed, he made his return June 9, helping Jeff Jarrett beat Malenko for the U.S. belt.

Since then, he has been acting very cocky. He has sneak-attacked Malenko several times and refused to help nephew Chavo Jr. when he was in trouble in the ring several times. Editor-in-Chief Dave Lenker, Managing Editor Brandi Mankiewicz, and Senior Writer Steve Anderson spoke with Guerrero after a recent **WCW Monday Nitro**.

DAVE LENKER: Thanks, Eddy, for being here. We have a lot of ground to cover.

EDDY GUERRERO: Ground to cover? What ground? If you are referring to this so-called change in my personality, you can save your questions. I haven't changed. You changed. The fans changed.

BRANDI MANKIEWICZ: Far be it for me to argue with your new persona, but it is a bit sudden and shocking. You're back to your old Los Gringos ways. What was up the past few years with you pandering to the fans?

“What did fan support do for me? Nothing. They didn't help me. My message to the people is this: Thanks for nothing. I didn't need you then and I certainly don't need you now.”

GUERRERO: Now that's a good question. You see, most American fans are not very bright. I knew that if I wanted to succeed, I'd have to alter my style at first. I wanted to gain their trust and use them as a launching pad to my career. They loved me. They cheered for me. But all along there were times when I wanted to spit in their faces.

STEVE ANDERSON: But you publicly said that you would no longer be wrestling the way you did when Art Barr was your partner. You chalked it up to immaturity and a youthful recklessness. You said that you grew up. How do you explain that now?

GUERRERO: First of all, I don't remember saying that. Typical yellow journalism on your part. Secondly, even if I did, that was part of my plan. All these WCW fans are too ignorant to appreciate a man who uses the Mexican style, so I had to Americanize myself a little. It made me sick to do it, but it got me where I am today.

LENKER: And where do you go from here, if you can get past Dean Malenko?

GUERRERO: If? Dean Malenko is not a problem. I beat him before I got here, and I beat him here in WCW. I will do it again many, many times if I have to. Malenko is a steppingstone to bigger and better things. There's the cruiserweight title, and don't forget how I was ripped off for my U.S. title.

MANKIEWICZ: Isn't that a tad fast? I mean, you just came back.

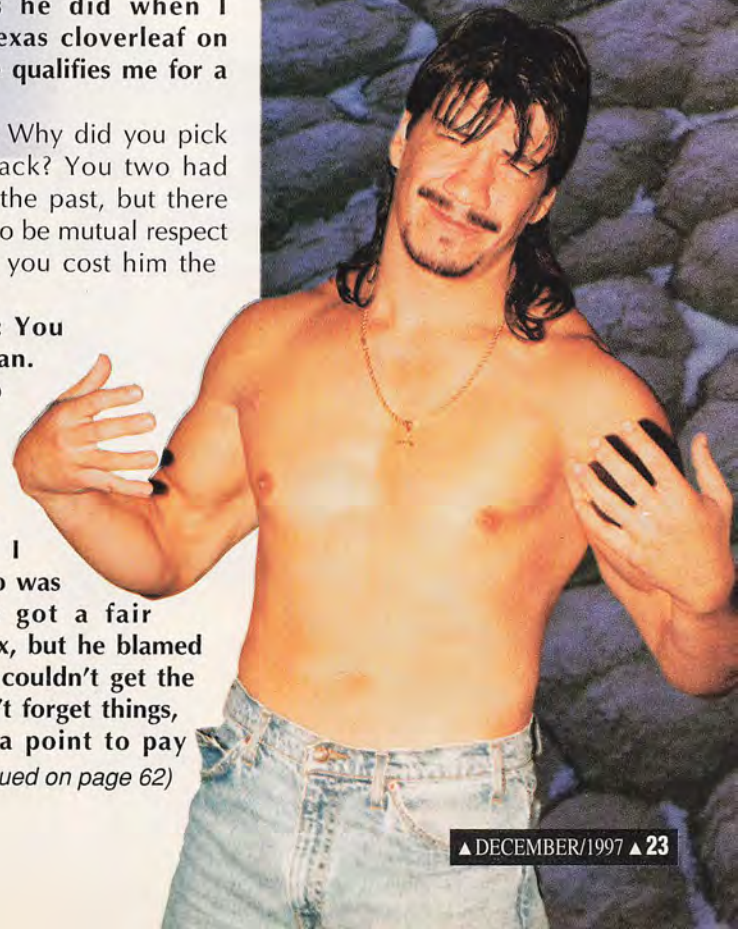
GUERRERO: Fast nothing. The only thing that is fast is my rise in the top 10. Look at what I've done since I came back. Did you see what happened on that card in Los Angeles? I beat Malenko with his own hold. *His own hold!* It was so easy. He has never experienced as much pain as he did when I slapped that Texas cloverleaf on him. That alone qualifies me for a title shot.

ANDERSON: Why did you pick Malenko to attack? You two had your battles in the past, but there always seemed to be mutual respect there. After all, you cost him the U.S. title.

GUERRERO: You are a stupid man. Dean Malenko blamed me when he lost the cruiserweight title in February. All I was trying to do was make sure he got a fair match with Syxx, but he blamed me because he couldn't get the job done. I don't forget things, and I make it a point to pay

(Continued on page 62)

Every issue, reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport.



FROM ONE EXTREME

Photo by Timothy A. Walker

**PERRY SATURN:
"THE INJURY
WAS BAD ...
REHAB IS WORSE"**

Perry Saturn, one-half of the ECW tag team The Eliminators, suffered a devastating knee injury in May. What follows is the first installment in an occasional series about what it takes for a wrestler to come back from such a serious physical ailment. In this story, we find out what happened, how he felt as he faced surgery, and his outlook just days after the operation

TO THE OTHER

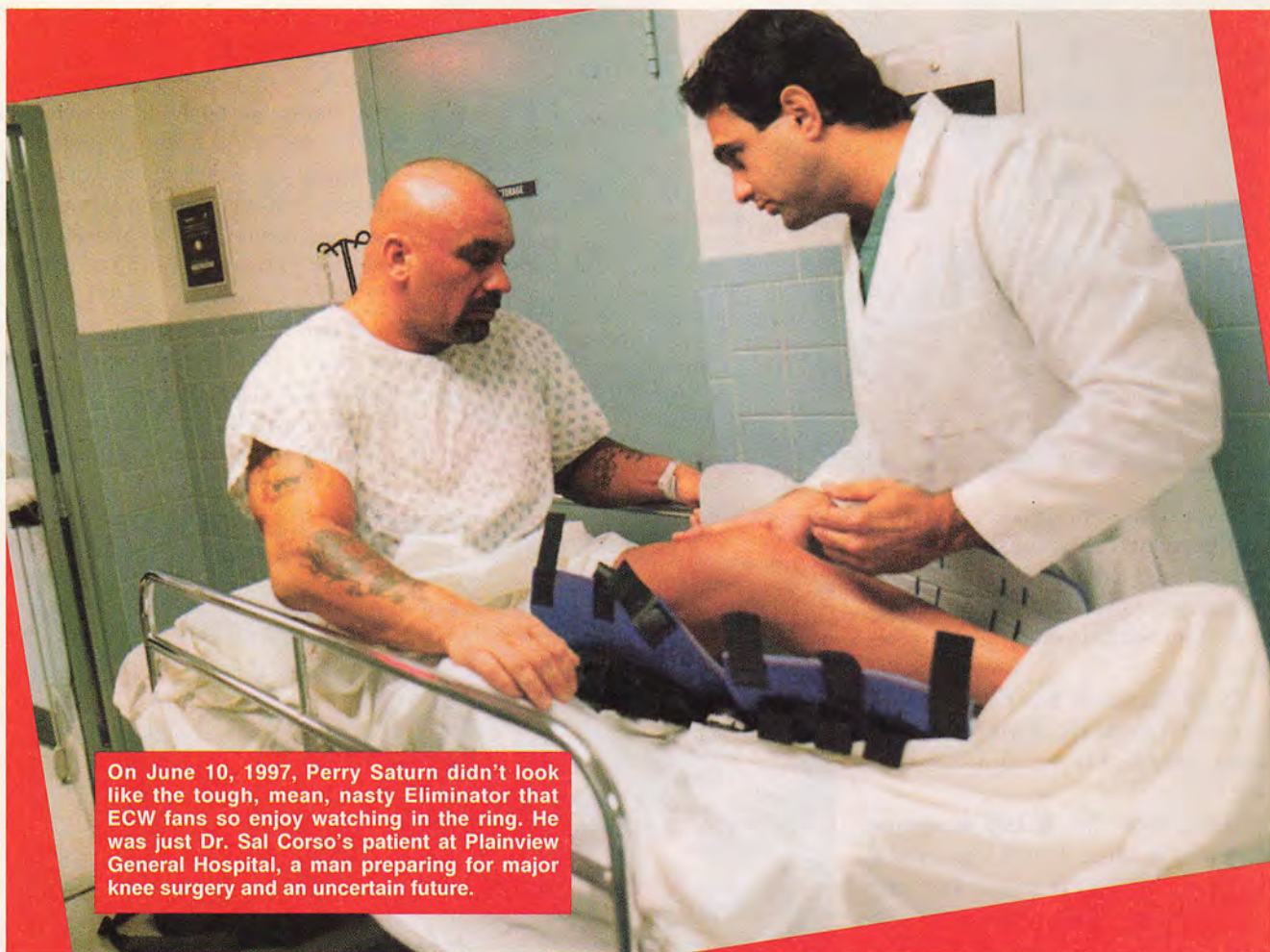


Photo by Vincent Pugliese

On June 10, 1997, Perry Saturn didn't look like the tough, mean, nasty Eliminator that ECW fans so enjoy watching in the ring. He was just Dr. Sal Corso's patient at Plainview General Hospital, a man preparing for major knee surgery and an uncertain future.

By Bryan Ethier

"I can't come to the phone right now because I'm somewhere over the rainbow lost, on my way over the yellow brick road to the Emerald City. Once I get there, if the great Oz says it's okay, I'll use his phone and call you back."

—message on
Perry Saturn's
answering machine

JUNE 9

It's 3:15 p.m. in Hicksville, New York, and Perry Saturn is the great and powerful Oz at the moment the Cowardly Lion, Dorothy, Scarecrow, and Tin Man reveal the great and mystical wizard to be merely human.

Unlike Oz, Saturn boasts no supernatural powers. As half of The Eliminators in ECW (with John Kronus), he does, however, share the Wizard's skill for making people believe.

You see, in Saturn's personal Emerald City, a physically and mental-

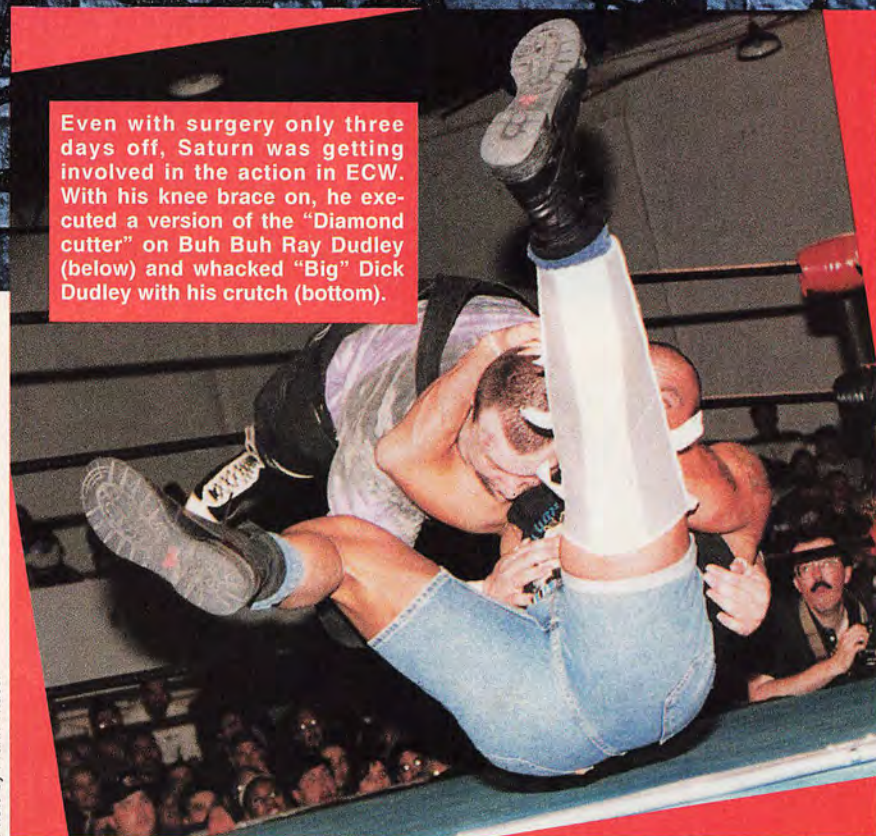
ly abused 12-year-old boy can become king over a land of disbelievers. In his magical kingdom, dreamers actually create a world others only imagine in their minds.

For Perry Saturn, Oz exists on two planes. The first is in his soul. It is the place where dreams are sown into his own personal reality. Oz also exists in the Emerald City, a.k.a. ECW, a world where Saturn can "be myself; not a puppet."

Imagination and reality teaming to create a universe where Saturn built

Even with surgery only three days off, Saturn was getting involved in the action in ECW. With his knee brace on, he executed a version of the "Diamond cutter" on Buh Buh Ray Dudley (below) and whacked "Big" Dick Dudley with his crutch (bottom).

Photo by Frank Vitucci



injury. Surgery was recommended, and doctors feared it would be a year before Saturn could return to the ring.

Now Saturn waits and wonders what the future holds. In less than 24 hours, he would be admitted to Plainview General Hospital, where Dr. Sal Corso would perform the surgery that would either mend his shattered knee or permanently close off the squared circle to him.

"I don't think it's set in yet," said Saturn. "I guess after tomorrow, once I realize that that's it, I'm not going to be able to wrestle for like a year, that's when it's going to set in. And I don't

his own yellow brick road.

He created this quasi-imaginary world as did the great Wizard because he once was an abused 12-year-old kid that Mom and Dad didn't give a damn about.

Now 30, Saturn has made it into a wonderful world filled with the excitement attendant to being a wrestling star.

Today, however, at 3:30 on a sullen Monday in June, Saturn wondered if Oz had been swept away. Ten days earlier, during The Eliminators' three-way match vs. PG-13 and the Dudleys, Saturn suffered torn anterior cruciate and meniscus ligaments and a cracked knee and tibia when he landed on an errant crutch left in the ring by New Jack, who had interfered. The injury occurred as Saturn attempted a front kick on D-Von Dudley.

"I knew it was real bad, but I didn't know it was this bad," Saturn said. "I landed half on the crutch, half on the mat. My partner knew I was badly hurt, but I don't know if anyone else knew."

The real pain came later, when doctors determined the severity of the

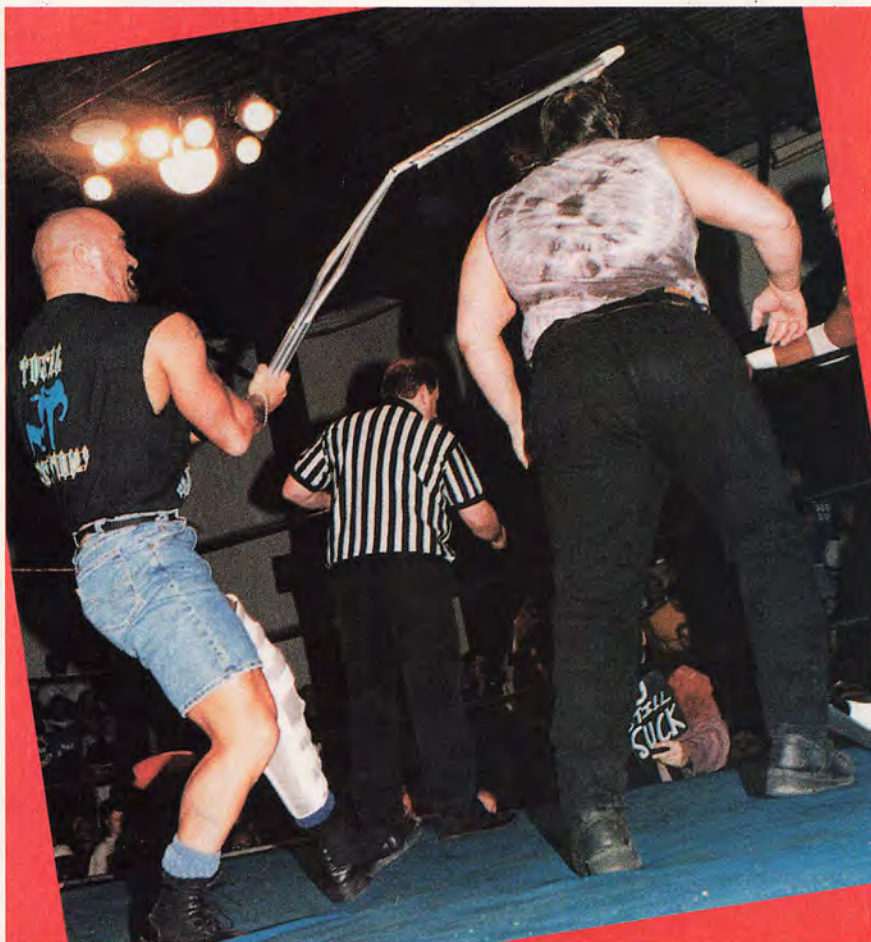


Photo by Frank Vitucci



have any idea how I'm going to deal with it."

Ironically, Saturn sustained the injury while performing a move as natural to him as diving is to a swimmer. Saturn has a third-degree black belt in the martial arts.

"If there is a reason, I don't know what it is. I'll just make the best of it. I'm good at making the best out of crummy situations. We'll take a negative topic and find some positive crap from it."

To that end, Saturn went on conducting business as if nothing had changed. A week after hurting his leg and only three days before surgery, Saturn was ringside at ECW Arena to lend moral support to Kronus, who would attempt to defend the ECW tag team title on his own. Saturn told himself he would not become physically involved, but the sight of Kronus being repeatedly double-teamed was too much for him to bear.

Saturn, knee brace and all, hopped onto the top rope, executed an elbow-drop on D-Von Dudley, and pinned him.

"I figured I could do no more damage to my leg," he said. "It means a great deal to me and my partner to be tag team champs, even if it's for one more week, two more weeks, however long. I'll do whatever I can to keep the title."

Sound like the irresponsible actions of a man drowning in false pride? It would be, but Oz is at stake.

"I'm very glad I have the opportunity to work for ECW. I don't think I'm anything else but lucky. It gives me the freedom to be me."

And who is me? The answer to that question explains why just 24 hours before having the first major surgery of his life, Perry Saturn is vividly imagining a prosperous future in



The most shocking thing Saturn did on the night of June 7 was execute a top-rope elbowdrop on D-Von Dudley and pin him. "I figured I could do no more damage to my leg," he said.

which he and Kronus are regarded as the best team ever. He is rebuilding his Oz the only way he knows how: through his imagination.

"My martial arts teacher, Ron Turner, changed my life," he explains. "He taught me discipline. He taught me to set goals. He taught me to achieve what I want. I deal with pain

very well. I understand that pain is temporary. The mental pain is tough. It takes time to heal. Mental pain is the worst thing to deal with."

Saturn deals with adversity, setbacks, and now the anguish of a potentially career-ending injury by meditating early in the morning and in the evening. This

(Continued on page 60)

Photo by Frank Vitucci

KEN
SHAMROCK

TOP

TO THE

CLIMB

DEADLY

HIS



**Former Ultimate Fighting
champion Ken Shamrock
has already beaten some
of the top names in the
WWF. But is he going too
fast too soon? And what
happens when he suffers
that first crushing loss?**

By Dave Rosenbaum

KEN SHAMROCK STARTED out like anyone else: He was a spectator. A mere face in the crowd for a WWF *Raw Is War* card at New York's Manhattan Center. That night, he was berated by both Jerry Lawler and Faarooq. Four months later, after victories over Big Van Vader and Hunter Hearst Helmsley, he was on the verge of superstardom ... or the worst crash of his life.

We've seen this before. Ultratalented newcomer makes a big splash when he enters a major federation, beats up some big stars for a few months, is projected as a world champion in-the-making, then crashes down to earth, either never to be heard from again, or to suffer through a mediocre career with that horrible label of "underachiever."

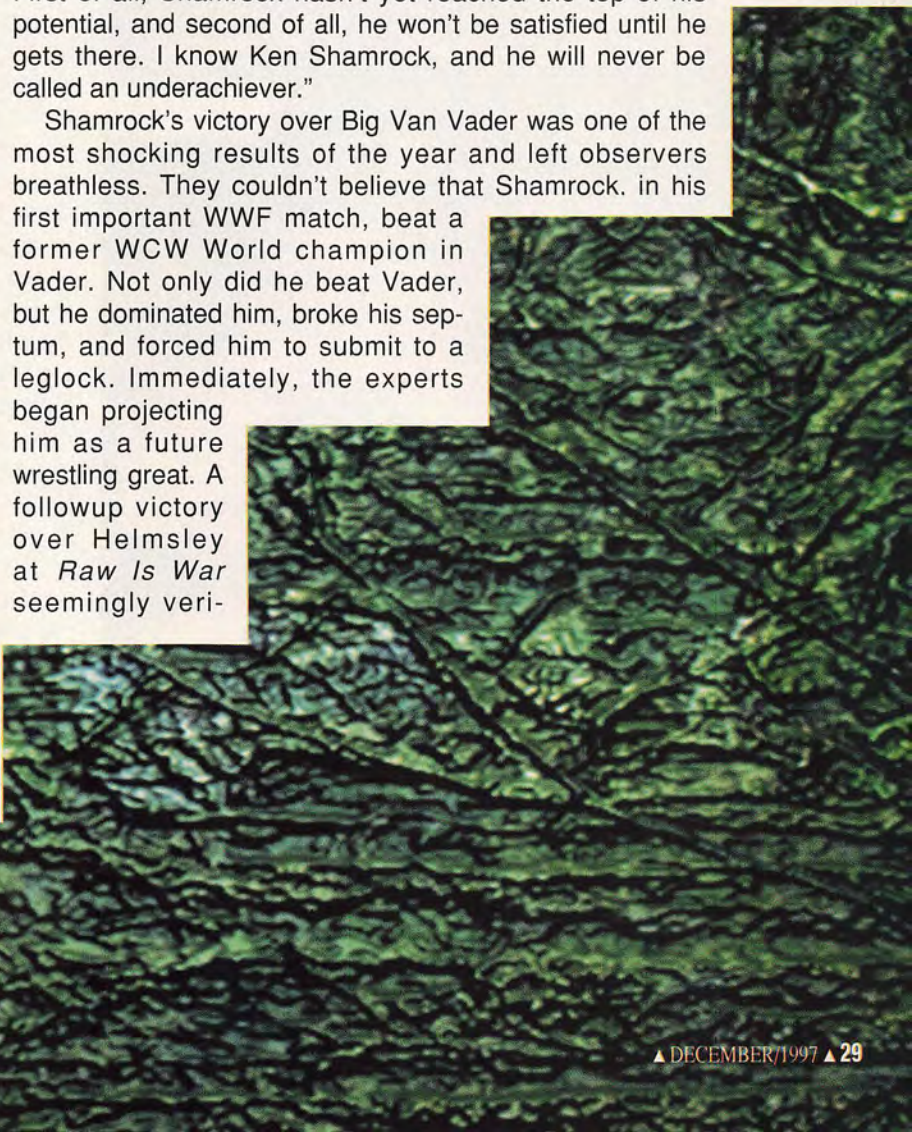
Ahmed Johnson. Sid Vicious. Dustin Rhodes. Even Big Van Vader, who won three WCW World titles. Their immediate impact was great. Their time at the top was relatively short. Now they're trying to get back. Vader, in fact, was on his way to becoming perhaps one of the all-time greats when he picked a fight with Hulk Hogan. Then Hogan got right up after a Vader power bomb. Many say Vader has not been the same monster since.

Is Ken Shamrock facing the same kind of danger?

"I don't think so," said WWF commentator Jim Ross. "Remember, he's a great all-around athlete and a former Ultimate Fighting champion. I guess some people might say, 'Well, we haven't heard much from Dan Severn, and he's a former UFC champion,' but this is different. First of all, Shamrock hasn't yet reached the top of his potential, and second of all, he won't be satisfied until he gets there. I know Ken Shamrock, and he will never be called an underachiever."

Shamrock's victory over Big Van Vader was one of the most shocking results of the year and left observers breathless. They couldn't believe that Shamrock, in his first important WWF match, beat a former WCW World champion in Vader. Not only did he beat Vader, but he dominated him, broke his septum, and forced him to submit to a leglock. Immediately, the experts began projecting him as a future wrestling great. A followup victory over Helmsley at *Raw Is War* seemingly veri-

Ken Shamrock stunned a lot of people when he beat Big Van Vader by submission to a leglock at the May In Your House. Someday soon he might not look back on that match so fondly.





Shamrock looked great against Owen Hart in a tag team match, but he had better realize that all it might take is one major loss for his confidence to be totally destroyed.

fied those claims ... or did they? Even Shamrock has his doubts.

"Listen, I know a lot of people are setting me up so they can see how far I can fall," Shamrock said. "I'm not going for it. As far as I'm concerned, I've won a few matches, which is nice, but I haven't accomplished anything yet. Have I won the Intercontinental title? No. Have I won the WWF title? No!

So what have I done? Where's my place in wrestling history? I'm going to have to earn that, and the way I see it, I have a long way to go."

That's sensible talk from what sounds like a sensible man. Unrealistic, too. There's a danger with becoming too good too fast, and it's almost impossible for a wrestler to control the speed of his ascent or descent. The more he wins, the better the competition will get. Unfortunately, he does not know how it feels to be on the bottom. As many champions will tell you, frustration is good. It teaches you to appreciate the better things in life. Then, once you get to the top, it makes you work harder to stay there.

So Shamrock is a willing and unknowing victim as the WWF places him in main event matches, such as the recent brawl pitting Undertaker and Shamrock against Owen Hart and Davey Boy Smith. Shamrock was in the spotlight, alongside some of the most established and successful wrestlers in the sport—and he fared well. But what did he do to get there?

"Nothing, really," said a WWF preliminary wrestler who demanded anonymity. "Absolutely nothing. He's been given a free



Fighting his way out of a Davey Boy Smith chinlock was not all that hard for Shamrock, but battling his way out a miserable slump could be. Many wrestlers have gotten mired in slumps soon after long winning streaks ended.

ride. I wish they would've treated me that way. But Shamrock will see. It's not as easy as it looks."

Shamrock said he doesn't think wrestling in the WWF is easy.

"Hey, I'm no rookie, but I guess I don't have much professional wrestling experience," Shamrock said. "But I know enough to respect my opponents, and I know what it's like to lose. I've done my share of winning. And anyone who thinks I didn't work to get to where I am doesn't know my career. I'm a former UFC champion. That means something. I think I'm capable of beating the best. I don't think I have to start at the bottom in the WWF."

Of course, Shamrock can't refuse main event matches. If the WWF wants to give him shots at the World or Intercontinental titles, Shamrock isn't going to turn around and say, "No thanks, guys. Maybe later." But what if he loses that first big title match on pay-per-view? Does he have any idea what it's like to wrestle in a major pay-per-view main event? The UFC, though important, pales in comparison to SummerSlam, Survivor Series, the Royal Rumble, and WrestleMania. Lose convincingly on those cards and nobody forgets it.

"I guess we're going to find out the hard way, right?" Shamrock said. "Well, let's give it a go. Let's see what happens. Just make sure somebody catches me on the way down."

He laughed when he said that. In a few months or a year, Shamrock might no longer be laughing. One day, he might be just another dejected WWF mid-carder.

Shamrock delivers a kick to Owen Hart's leg. In just a few months, he has proven he has the physical skills to excel as a wrestler. Is he mentally tough enough to get through the bad times he will likely experience soon?

A sunset flip almost earned Shamrock a pinfall against Davey Boy Smith in this match. You can be sure the "British Bulldog" isn't the only man in the WWF looking to knock this former UFC champ down.



THE WWF'S LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

The 10 Ways

To Make It

A Success

Photos by Bill Apter

THE LAND OF the giants has come down to size. The WWF, long dominated by gigantic grapplers such as Hulk Hogan, Andre the Giant, King Kong Bundy, The Undertaker, Diesel, and "Psycho" Sid Vicious, has made room for wrestlers who don't quite measure up in the height and weight departments, but more than make up for their

It's about time that the WWF paid some attention to the light heavyweights.

Now it needs to do whatever it takes to make the division the best it can be

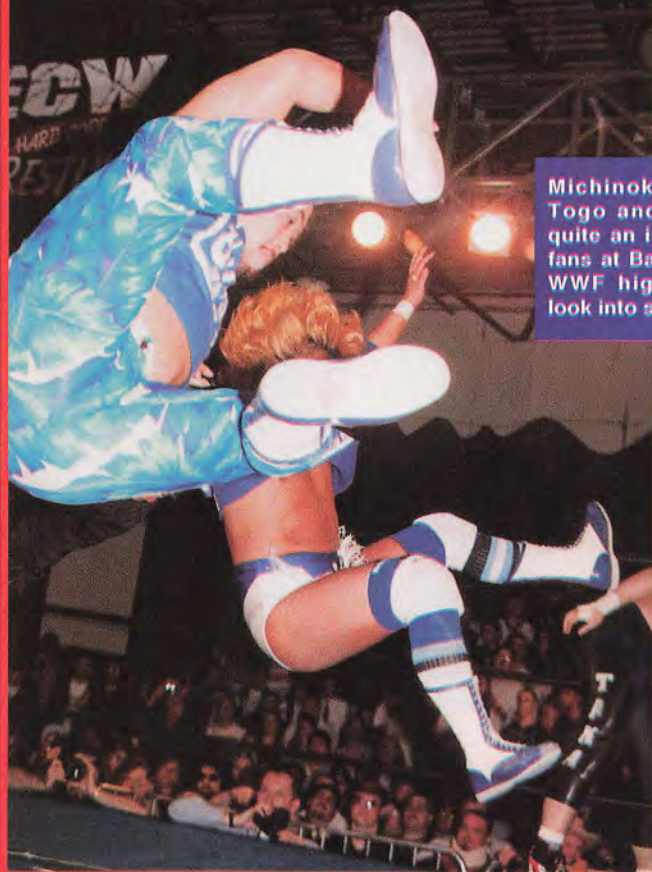


AWYWEIGHT DIVISION

lack of size with outstanding wrestling skills. The WWF's light heavyweight division has arrived.

But, as the WWF learned at the outset, there's no guarantee of immediate success. In the first official light heavyweight division match, Tommy Rogers (222 pounds) battled Bobby Fulton (220 pounds) in a battle of former tag team partners (The Fantastics) that hardly captured the public's imagination. After all, these were two stars who had their best days in the 1980s—and not even in the WWF. And other members of the so-called light heavyweight division are borderline light heavyweights—men such as Brian Christopher (230 pounds) and Scott Putski (235

Though Brian Christopher (opposite page, left) is talented, at 230 pounds, he hardly qualifies as a classic light heavyweight. On the other hand, The Great Sasuke (leaping onto Kuniaki Kobayashi, below) is the kind of superstar around whom a light heavyweight division could be built.



Michinoku Pro stars Dick Togo and Terry Boy made quite an impression on ECW fans at Barely Legal. Perhaps WWF higher-ups ought to look into signing them.



Photo by Koichi Yoshizawa

pounds). They're close to being heavyweights.

Reality was finally discovered with the signing of former J-Crown champion The Great Sasuke, who weighs a more reasonable 185 pounds.

The light heavyweight division, like WCW's cruiserweight division, can be a rousing success ... if the WWF goes about promoting it properly. Here are our 10 suggestions to make it happen.

* * *

1. Raid Mexico. Some of the most spectacular lightweight aerial wrestlers in the world come from Mexico. We're talking about athletes such as Psicosis, Juventud Guerrera, and La Parka. And there



Taka Michinoku attempts to pin Masato Yakushiji at Barely Legal. There are so many great light heavyweights in Japan. The WWF really should do a lot of scouting there ... and perhaps even run tours there.

improve its talent base more and must explore all avenues. Don't wait for these guys to come to you, WWF. Go out and get them.

3. Raid WCW. Well, that's not really what we mean, but things could get interesting here. Rey Mysterio Jr. weighs 140 pounds. Dean Malenko weighs 216 pounds. Guerrero looks like he barely eats. Syxx made his mark in the WWF before jumping to the NWO. There's no doubt about it: WCW has most of the top light heavy-weight stars under contract. But contracts run out. The WWF should find out when some of these stars are scheduled to become free agents and go after them when they are available.

4. One card, one light heavy-weight bout. Fans who attend live cards, watch *Raw Is War* on the USA

(Continued on page 60)

Both Leif Cassidy and Scott Putski could contribute some to the success of the light heavyweight division, but they, like Brian Christopher, could be considered regular heavyweights.

are more where they come from. *Many* more. In the tradition of former wrestling greats, El Santo and Mil Mascaras, most of them wear masks, so they're colorful, and they all have incredible aerial repertoires that boggle the imagination. WCW has found plenty of talent south of the border. The WWF needs to get into the bidding war.

2. Raid Japan. Japanese wrestlers tend to be a little larger and not quite as daring as their Mexican counterparts, but there's some great talent in the Land of the Rising Sun. Sasuke isn't the only great little man. The WWF also signed one of his rivals, Taka Michinoku. But the WWF needs to



close-up: RANDY SAVAGE

ONE OF ONLY four men to win both the WCW and WWF world titles, "Macho Man" Randy Savage is one of the most accomplished wrestlers in history ... The son of grappler Angelo Poffo checks in at 6'2", 237 pounds ... His brother, Lanny, is also a wrestler ... Played in the St. Louis Cardinals, Cincinnati Reds, and Chicago White Sox systems for five years ... Circumvented baseball contractual problems by wrestling under a mask as The Spider for three years ... Weighed only 175 pounds when he made his mat debut and beat Paul Cristy in November 1973 ... Devoted himself full-time to wrestling starting in 1976 ... Ole Anderson gave him the name Savage because, said Ole, "he wrestled like a savage!" ... Won the Southeastern tag belts with Lanny ... Held the Intercontinental Championship Wrestling title from 1979 to 1983 ... Signed with Jimmy Hart and moved to the Mid-Southern area, where he feuded with Jerry Lawler and won the heavyweight title several times ... Wrestled Lanny in an empty arena in late-1984; Lawler was the referee ... Moved to the WWF in 1985 and was wooed by several managers. Surprisingly, he settled upon the relatively unknown Elizabeth ... Won the WWF Intercontinental title from Tito Santana on February 6, 1986 ... Nearly ended Rick Steamboat's career by hitting him with a timekeeper's bell ... More than 93,000 fans at WrestleMania III saw Steamboat capture the Intercontinental title from Savage in the Match of the Year for 1987 ... Hulk Hogan was in Savage's corner when Savage beat Ted DiBiase for the World title at WrestleMania IV ... Hogan and Savage formed The Megapowers ... The alliance was doomed when Savage accused Hogan of "lusting after" Elizabeth. Finally, Savage attacked Hogan in the dressing room ... Lost the World title—and Elizabeth—to Hogan at WrestleMania V ... "Sensational" Sherri Martel became his manager ... Lost a retirement match to The Ultimate Warrior at WrestleMania VII ... Sherri then turned against him, and Elizabeth reunited with Savage ... They were married at SummerSlam '91 (and eventually divorced) ... Was reinstated and beat Jake Roberts at Tuesday in Texas on December 3, 1991 ... Feuded with Ric Flair when Flair revealed a set of incriminating (electronically altered) photos of himself and Elizabeth ... Pinned Flair for his second World title at WrestleMania VIII ... Wrestling with an injured leg, he lost the title to Flair on September 1, 1992 ... Teamed with Curt Hennig and beat Flair and Razor Ramon at Survivor Series '92 ... Began concentrating on his duties as a TV commentator ... Beat Lawler for the USWA title on October 11, 1993, with help from WWF head Vince McMahon ... Was sneak-attacked by former ally Crush on *Monday Night Raw* ... Crush accused Savage of turning his back on him when he was injured ... Beat Crush in an anything-goes match at WrestleMania X when he tied him up in a room under the Madison Square Garden tunnel ... Wrestled occasionally in Smoky Mountain ... Was attacked by Bob Backlund at *Raw* on October 17, 1994. Savage was coming to the rescue of Lex Luger, who had been attacked by Backlund ... Unable to come to terms on a new WWF contract, Savage left the federation on November 7, 1994 ... Appeared on *WCW Saturday Night* on December 3 and said he came to WCW to confront Hogan ... Said he would either shake Hogan's hand or slap his face at Starrcade '94 ... As Kevin Sullivan and Avalanche attacked Hogan at Starrcade, Savage cleared the ring and shook Hogan's hand ... Hogan and Savage defeated Sullivan and Brutus Beefcake at Clash of the Champions XXX ... Savage and Sting defeated Avalanche and Big Bubba at SuperBrawl V. Also on the card, Sting and Savage rescued Hogan from an attack by Big Van Vader and



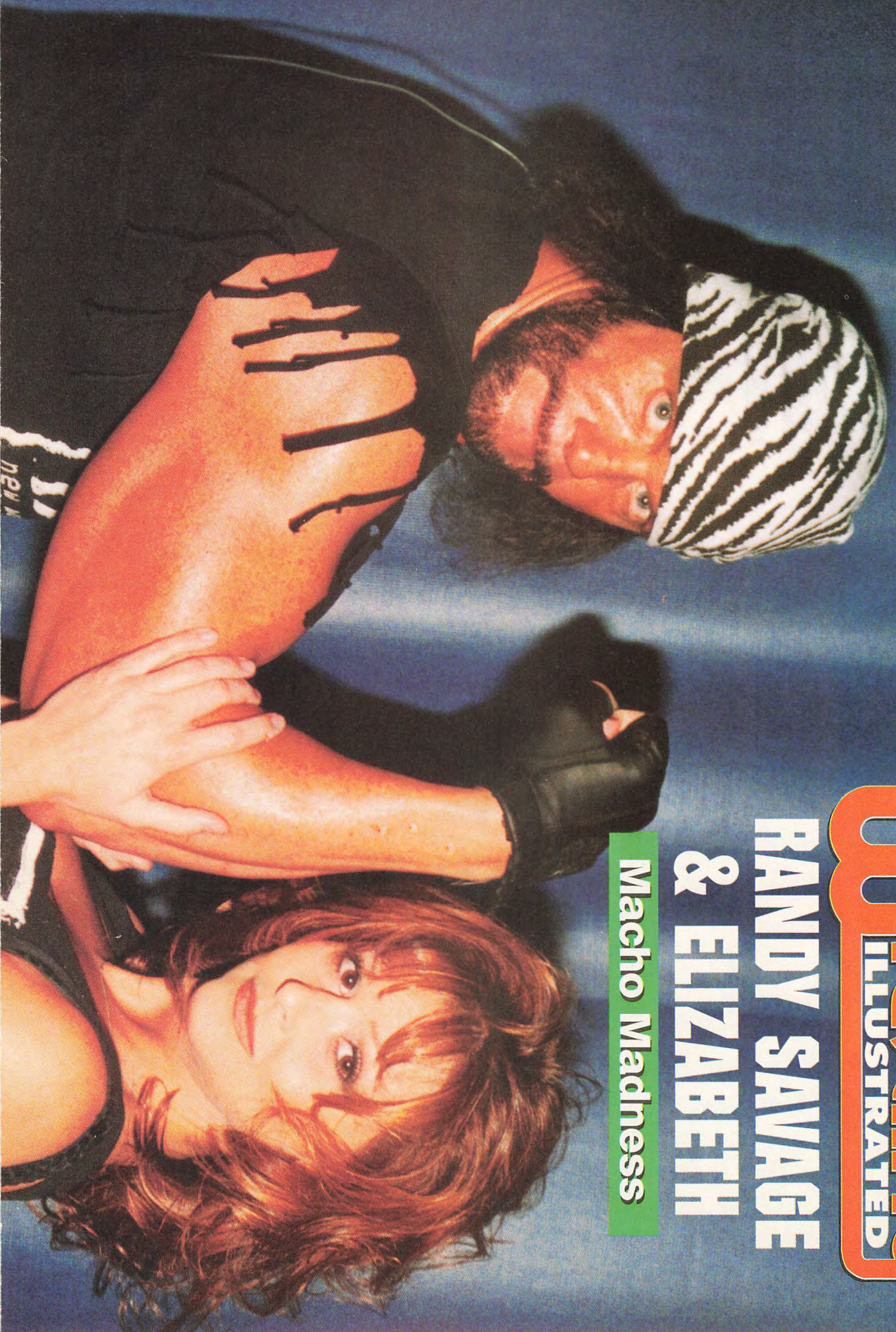
Flair ... Continued his feud with Sullivan's Dungeon of Doom by beating Avalanche by disqualification at Uncensored '95. Flair, wearing women's clothing and a wig, ran into the ring and attacked Savage ... Savage and Hogan had Angelo Poffo and The Renegade in their corner for a Slamboree '95 confrontation with Flair and Vader ... Hogan covered Flair for the pin and a brawl ensued. When Poffo climbed into the ring to help, Flair and Arn Anderson pummeled him, then Flair locked him in a figure-four leglock ... Savage demanded that WCW Commissioner Nick Bockwinkel suspend Flair (he didn't) ... Tried to get revenge against Flair at The Great American Bash, but was pinned in 14:42. Poffo, who had choked Flair with his cane outside the ring before getting leveled by Flair, helped his injured son back to the dressing room ... Pinned Flair at Bash at the Beach ... Savage, Hogan, Lex Luger, and Sting defeated Zodiac, Meng, Kamala, and Shark at Fall Brawl's "War Games" ... Pinned Luger in 5:27 at Halloween Havoc after Luger collided with Jimmy Hart ... Also pinned Zodiac earlier in the card ... Joined Buddy Rogers, Flair, and Hogan as the only men to win world titles in both the NWA/WCW and the WWF when he won a 60-man battle royal to capture the vacant WCW World title on November 26. He was the only man left standing after eliminating One Man Gang with 29:19 gone ... But there was controversy: Hogan claimed that he hadn't been eliminated by The Giant, but had been pulled underneath the bottom rope ... Lost the belt to Flair at Starrcade '95 in 8:41 as the other Horsemen interfered on Flair's behalf ... Beat Flair by DQ in rematches ... Regained the belt by pinning Flair on January 22, 1996, in Las Vegas ... Elizabeth was in Savage's corner for a rematch with Flair at SuperBrawl VI on February 11, but she helped Flair regain the title. Elizabeth handed Flair one of her shoes ... Flair used Elizabeth in psychological warfare against Savage ... Pinned Flair in a Domsday steel cage match at Uncensored '96 ... Luger, Sting, and Savage prepared to face Kevin Nash, Scott Hall, and a mystery partner at the Bash at the Beach ... The mystery partner turned out to be Hogan, who came to the ring and legdropped the fallen Savage, then high-fived Hall and Nash ... Savage became a target of the New World Order. On September 2, 1996, The Giant choke-slammed him, then Hogan legdropped him and spray-painted a yellow streak down his back ... Savage had become a main player for WCW in its war against the NWO ... Meanwhile, Elizabeth was trying to get Savage to forgive her for her actions; Savage was near tears as he viewed a videotape of his ex-wife begging for forgiveness ... Was pinned by Hogan at Halloween Havoc after the NWO interfered ... Didn't make his intentions clear when he returned to WCW in late-January and stood alongside Sting ... At SuperBrawl VII, he helped Hogan defeat Roddy Piper ... Savage slipped Hogan a pair of brass knuckles. Then Hogan and Savage punished Piper with legdrops and elbowsmaashes ... Helped Team NWO win a three-way elimination match at Uncensored '97 ... The Savage-Dallas Page feud started at that event as Savage and Elizabeth revealed nude pictures of Kimberly in *Playboy's Nude Celebrities* and spray-painted her and Dallas ... Was pinned by DDP at Spring Stampede. Afterward, Savage grabbed Kimberly by the hair and threatened to hit her. NWO head Eric Bischoff stopped him ... Page again attacked Savage at Slamboree '97 ... Hogan and Savage injured Page's ribs during an attack on Nitro ... Pummeled Page at The Great American Bash and also attacked two referees and a photographer ... Savage's feud with Page is one of his most intense ever; he seems in no hurry to end it.



PRO Wrestling
ILLUSTRATED

RANDY SAVAGE & ELIZABETH

Macho Madness



GREATEST MATCH

vs. Ted DiBiase, March 27, 1988. Hard to believe we're closing in on a decade since the "Macho Man" won his first world title, but it was way back at WrestleMania IV that he beat DiBiase in a tournament final to capture the WWF belt. Savage beat Butch Reed, Greg Valentine, and One Man Gang earlier on the card and got an assist from his buddy Hulk Hogan in the finals.



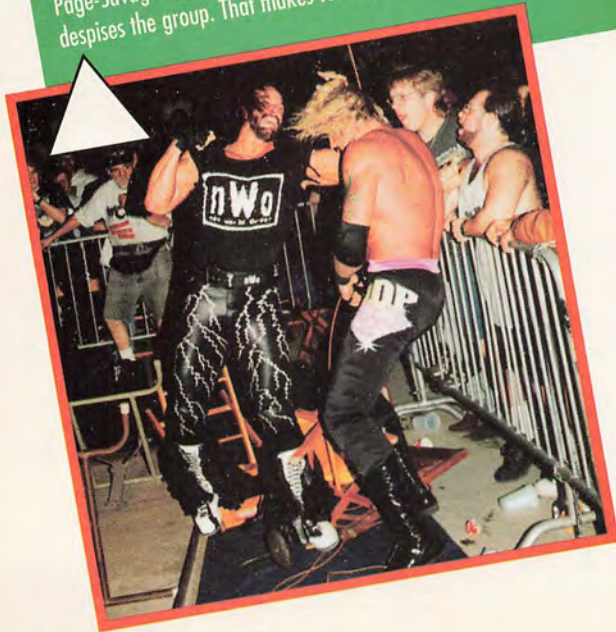
TOUGHEST OPPONENT

Hulk Hogan. There are those who say that the reason Savage has sought Hogan's friendship so many times is that he just can't find a way to beat him. Maybe that's true. He never beat him cleanly in the WWF, but thought he could do so at last year's Halloween Havoc. And he did appear to have him beat there ... until a few NWO members got involved. After that match, Savage apparently gave up trying. He joined the NWO a few months later.



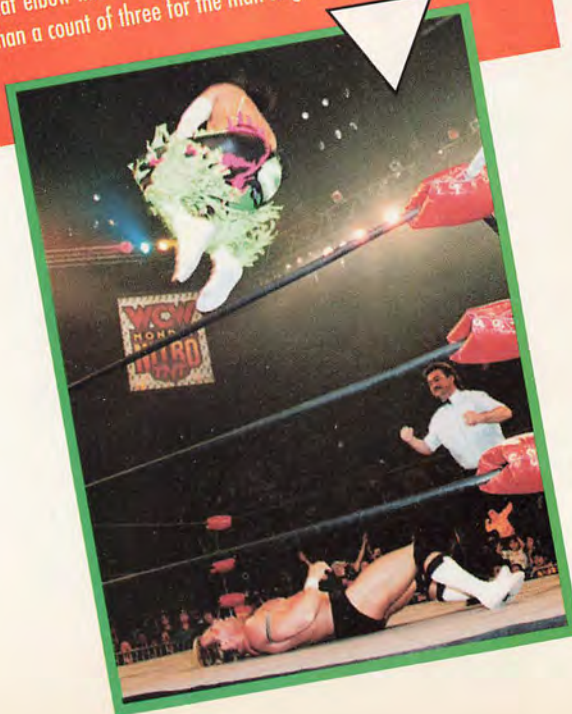
MOST HATED OPPONENT

Dallas Page. This wild feud started at this year's Uncensored when, for no apparent reason, Savage and Elizabeth decided to show off a copy of Playboy's Nude Celebrities that just happened to feature nude photos of Kimberly Page. Savage also spray-painted both DDP and Kim. There have been dozens of intense, violent Page-Savage matches since. Savage is 100 percent NWO. Page despises the group. That makes for a good feud.



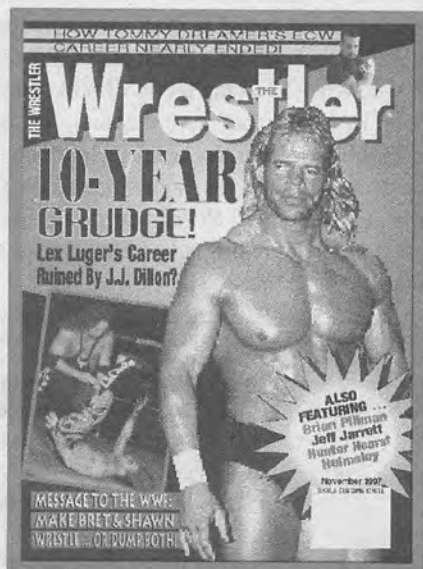
FAVORITE MANEUVER

Flying elbowdrop. Why change what works? The "Macho Man" has been criticized for not adding much to his repertoire of moves and holds in recent years, but there seems to be no reason for him to change his finisher. When he comes off the top rope and drives that elbow into a beaten opponent's chest, it usually takes more than a count of three for the man to get up.

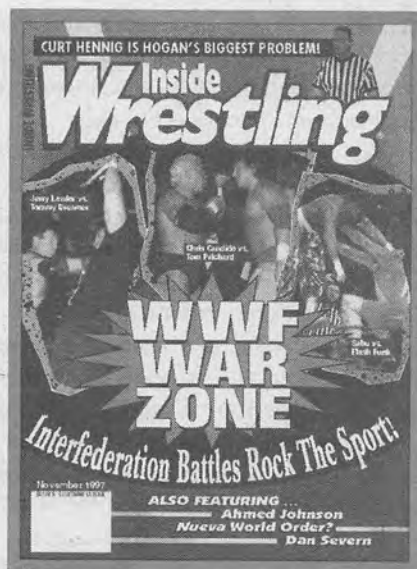


.....this month in.....

THE Wrestler



Inside Wrestling



LEX LUGER can't get a shot at the WCW World title, but who's to blame for this?

HULK HOGAN? Maybe. But could **J.J. DILLON** also be conspiring against Lex?

Is it possible he has held a grudge against him for 10 years? ... The feud between

BRET HART and **SHAWN MICHAELS** went too far for our tastes when the two men got into a brawl inside a dressing room.

We say it's time the WWF *forced* them to wrestle each other—or dumped them both! ...

We know **TOMMY DREAMER** hates **RAVEN**, but what was he thinking when he risked it all to send him to WCW two months early?

All this—and much more!—
in the November 1997 issue of
The Wrestler



What's going on here? ECW wrestlers are competing on WWF TV shows. **JERRY**

LAWLER invades ECW, then sees ECW wrestlers come after him in the USWA.

USWA wrestlers get their shot in the WWF.

All this interfederation action can get confusing at times, but it's great for the sport ... Why is **CURT HENNIG** **HULK HOGAN'S**

biggest problem? We'll tell you ... **AHMED**

JOHNSON may be saying some very nasty

things now that he's a member of the **NATION OF DOMINATION**, but it's possible

that the Pearl River powerhouse is trying to instill morals in the rulebreaking group

All this—and much more!—
in the November 1997 issue of
Inside Wrestling



WF vs. WCW

**Each month,
PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED
takes a close look at
the latest developments
in the most crucial battle
in the sport's history!**

CHANGES, CHANGES, CHANGES ... can you blame the WWF for making more changes?

First there was the decision to shift the starting time of *Raw Is War* from 8 p.m. Eastern on Monday nights to a 9 p.m., then, as you might know by now, there was the decision to stop broadcasting *Raw* live every week.

Just before press time, the WWF confirmed that, starting in September, *Raw* would air live every other week. The other weeks' shows would be taped the night after the live *Raws* for broadcast the following Monday. Confused? The bottom line is that it's a lot more expensive to produce a live show every week than it is to produce one every two weeks.

Would these changes have been made if *Raw* was getting great ratings and beating *Nitro* week after week? Probably not. We suspect the higher-ups at the USA Network would have found a way to keep *Raw* in its old time slot and even made sure the WWF went live every Monday night if *Raw* were winning the ratings war. Right now, the WWF had better hope that USA never decides it doesn't want any wrestling on its schedule at all. What would the federation do then?

A very strange thing happened on July 14: The WWF aired a one-hour highlights show immediately after *Raw Is War* went off the air. Showcasing many of the great WWF cards of summers past, the show was entertaining and got good ratings. It was strange, though, because it featured so many current WCW stars—men such as Hulk Hogan, Scott Hall, Roddy Piper, and Randy Savage. Even many WCW insiders admitted they were shocked that the WWF would show off their wrestlers on its TV show.

Perhaps this was done to get people (even those who prefer *Nitro*) used to watching a third hour of wrestling on Mondays, thus preparing them for *Raw*'s time change.

There were a few subtle shots taken at WCW stars on that show. The WWF, when showing a clip of Yokozuna squashing Hulk Hogan in 1993, made sure the audio of then-WWF commentator Bobby Heenan declaring "Hulkamania" to be dead could be heard. Also on that show, Andre the Giant was described as being the biggest WWF star of all-time. Tallest, for sure, but that Hogan guy might be able to stake a claim to being the greatest.

NIELSEN RATINGS

	Date	Rating	Households	Main Event
Raw	7/7	2.5	1.76 mil.	Bret-Goldust
Nitro	7/7	3.4	2.41 mil.	Steiners-Benoit/McMichael
Raw	7/14	2.6	1.84 mil.	Austin/Dude-Owen/Smith
Nitro	7/14	3.5	2.51 mil.	Jarrett-Flair
Raw	7/21	4.1	2.92 mil.	Harts/Smith-Dude/Austin/Taker
Nitro	7/22	3.7	2.66 mil.	Hall/Nash-Flair/Benoit
Raw	7/28	2.9	2.07 mil.	Patriot-Hart
Nitro	7/28	3.4	2.41 mil.	Giant-Muta
Cumulative: Nitro—3.07; Raw—2.60				

VOICE OF THE FANS

"Ever since Rob Van Dam showed up on *Raw Is War*, I have started to enjoy wrestling again. This whole WWF-ECW-USWA war is just what the WWF needs to boost its sagging Monday night ratings. Van Dam has proved that he is definitely worthy of wrestling not only on Monday nights, but any night of the week."—Lydia Cortez, Chicago, IL

"I have been able to go see both Monday night shows live and I must say I enjoyed *Nitro* much more than *Raw*. The crowd was more enthusiastic and there were more quality matches on the card. *Raw* was okay, but it wasn't as exciting as it was just a few years ago."—Evan Williams, Memphis, TN

"Can someone explain to me why we need to see Kimberly Page and a bunch of her friends doing dance routines on *Nitro*?

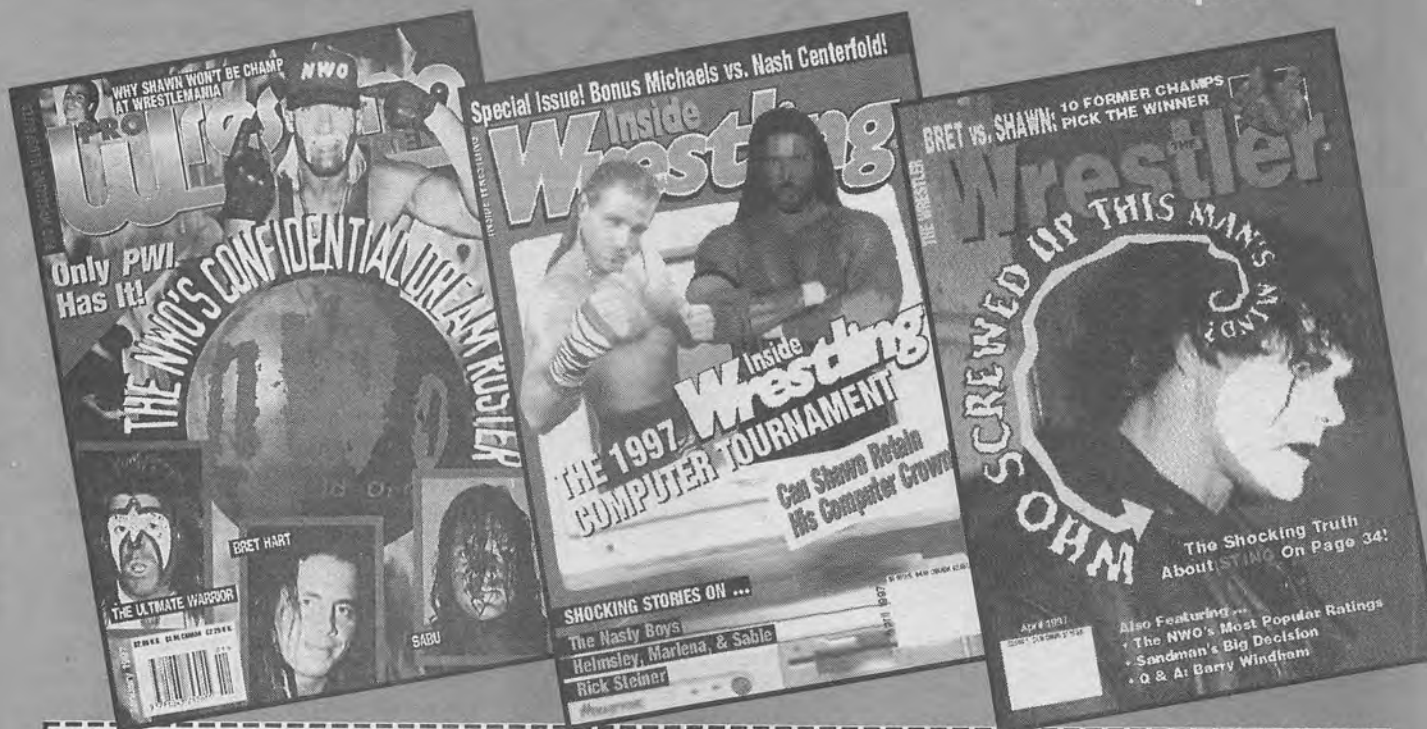
This is even more pointless than having two of the best female managers in the WWF peddling merchandise while wearing very little clothing."—Barry Roscoe, Lewisburg, WV

"I'm glad the WWF is finally starting a light heavyweight division. Maybe now they will sign some of the top young independent talent that is available. It would only be to the WWF's advantage to get these young guys to agree to an iron-clad contract while WCW's still catering to the old generation."—Holly Norwood, Scranton, PA

"I think it's time for the WWF to give up and move *Raw* to another night. *Nitro* is just too dominant. There is no way for Vince McMahon to match bank accounts with Ted Turner."—Scott Daniels, Harrisonburg, VA

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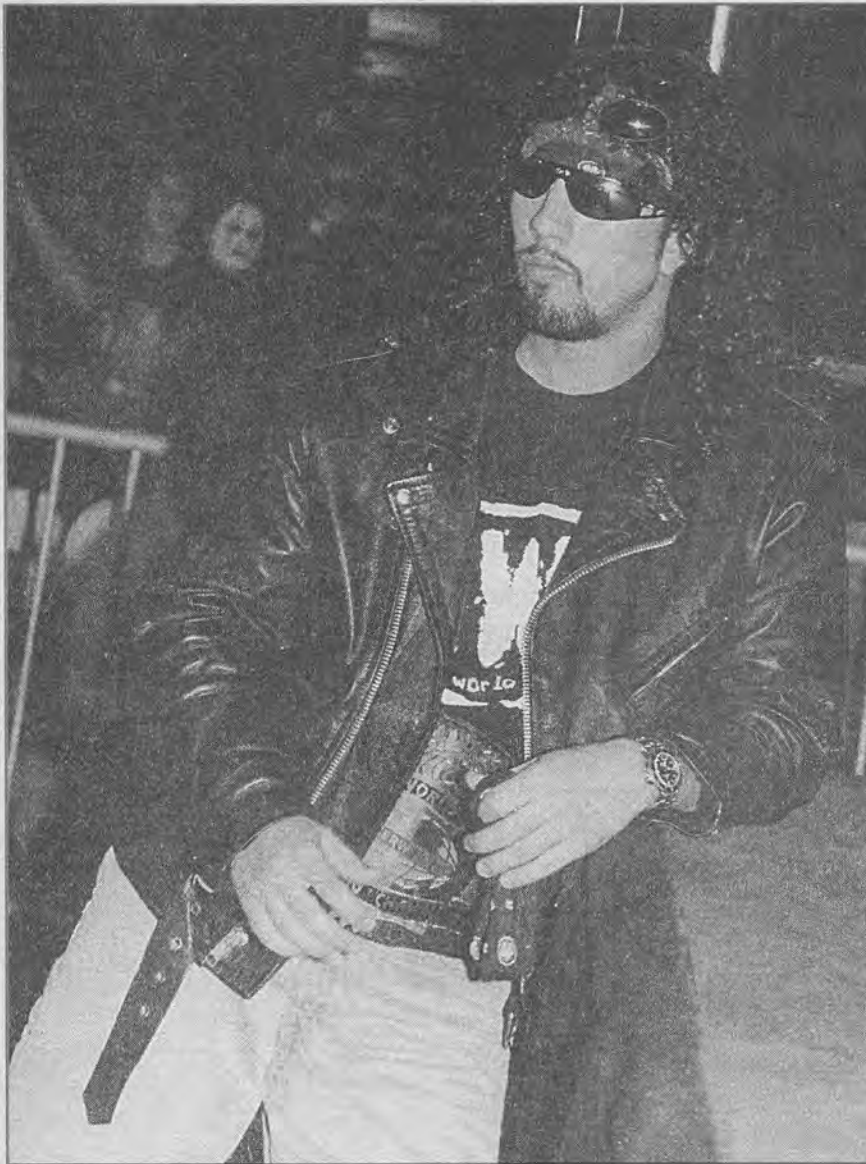
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the Steel Cage

By Dave Rosenbaum



Syxx has done a lot of bad things since he joined the NWO, but it seems unlikely he would go to the trouble of finding out the itinerary of a certain wrestling journalist and stealing his luggage in an airport, doesn't it?

STUPID AND STUPIDER. An airline just told me it misplaced my luggage. The NWO stole it. I'm pretty sure of this, just as I'm sure that The Undertaker's WWF World title reign won't last until Christmas and Hulk Hogan won't make another WCW title defense before Christmas. As I approached the baggage carousel at Logan Airport in Boston, I saw a man who looked suspiciously like Syxx grabbing a black garment bag—it looked just like my own—and running away.

Funny, though. Syxx was on *Nitro* that night, and he wasn't wearing any of my clothes. The thing is, not a single member of the NWO would have any use for my wardrobe because I don't own a single black item of clothing, and those guys wear black almost exclusively. Black jeans, black leather pants, black T-shirts, black vests, black headbands, and I'd bet they wear black underwear, too, although I haven't investigated the matter. Perhaps Brandi Mankiewicz or Liz Hunter can do the undercover work on that.

So why did Syxx steal my luggage?

Well, he didn't. My luggage disappeared for a day, and as I'm writing this, I'm sitting in the Kinko's on Dartmouth Street in Boston trying to keep from getting really ticked off. I'm wearing yesterday's jeans and yesterday's shirt—even yesterday's underwear and socks. *Yuck!* A few minutes ago, President Clinton's entourage drove by while on its way to lunch at the Park Plaza Hotel, and my only thought was, *I bet they didn't lose his luggage.* No way. The President's luggage has never been replaced ... ever. Even during the Civil War, President Lincoln always knew the whereabouts of his clothing.

So what's the point of this column? Right now, there is no point. I'm sitting in Kinko's because I had to rent a computer to write this; the airline stole that, too. This computer costs \$12 an hour. Therefore, I'm just writing as fast as I can, hoping to get to the end.

Whoa! Wait a second! I just came up with an idea for this column; I'm pretty sure the NWO stole my luggage

because they're responsible for everything that goes wrong in WCW. Bad card? Blame the NWO. Boring *Nitro*? Blame the NWO. Belt missing? NWO. Cheating? NWO. Car accident? The NWO must have caused it. Local J.C. Penney's out of black Fruit of the Loom T-shirts. The NWO must have just gone shopping there.

Just got your butt kicked? NWO's fault, of course.

Although, in one recent case, it really wasn't the NWO's fault. It was Rey Misterio Jr.'s fault.

Now, I'm not the biggest man in the world. I'm 6'1". A few years ago, I weighed 180 pounds. But I'm also not the stupidest man in the world. I try not to get into fights with men who are six inches taller and 100 pounds heavier. Actually, I try not to get into any fights at all.

But Rey Misterio Jr. must not be that smart. He's 5'3", 140 pounds. Personally, I think Dave Lenker could kick his butt in a fight.

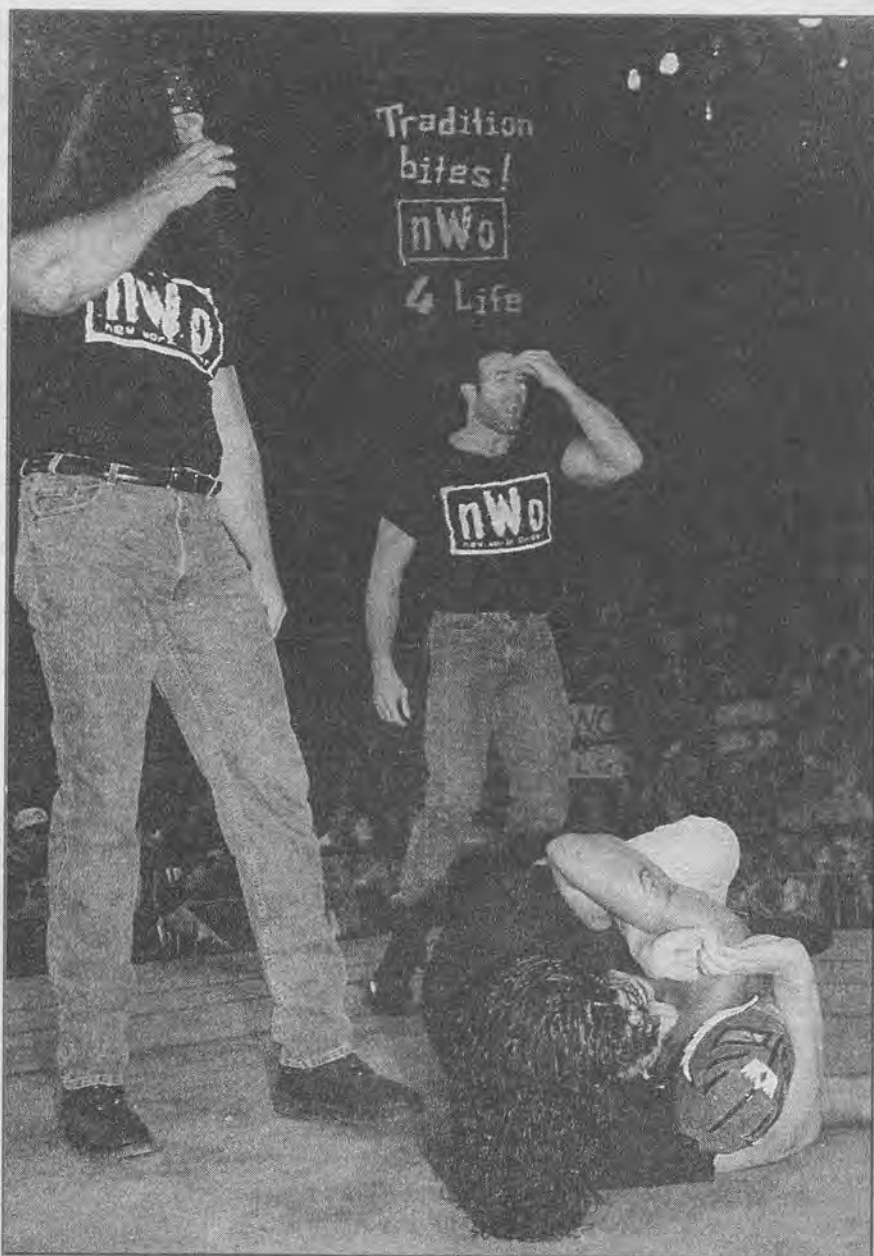
Kevin Nash is 7', 356 pounds. Very few men in this world can kick his butt. He's a former WWF World champion and a current WCW World tag team champion. The man is a fighting machine. He's tough. He'll fight you in the ring or in the parking lot. Get out of his way, especially if you're 21 inches shorter and 216 pounds lighter.

Misterio, however, didn't take the time to figure out the math. Having already been slammed up against an aluminum trailer by Nash and power-bombed by him a few times, he then was stupid enough to challenge Nash to a match. Nash happily accepted. Misterio very nearly died.

Pound-for-pound, Rey Misterio is one of the best wrestlers in the world. In fact, pound-for-pound, he just might be the best wrestler in the world. He's the Spud Webb of wrestling. But pound-for-pound counts for nothing in the wrestling ring. It's absolutely meaningless. Pound-for-pound means you get pounded. Badly.

It was frightening. I thought Nash was going to split poor Rey in half. It's amazing that Misterio can still walk.

Anyway, I'd just like to say that,



Kevin Nash and Scott Hall watch Syxx punish Rey Misterio Jr. Nash beat up Misterio in a match two weeks later. Dave Rosenbaum says Misterio was foolish to challenge a man 21 inches taller and 216 pounds heavier than him.

pound-for-pound, Rey Misterio Jr. is the stupidest man in the world.

Rey Misterio is the kind of man who would check his computer on an airline that is notorious for losing luggage.

He is even stupider than that. I would never challenge Kevin Nash to a physical contest of any kind, including tennis, which I'm not half-bad at.

When Nash got Misterio into the ring, it looked like a giant was strangling one of those Power Ranger toys. J.J. Dillon should not have allowed the match.

The scary part is that Misterio probably didn't learn his lesson. As you read this, he's probably looking at the tapes of his match against Nash and trying to figure out what went wrong.

Well, I'll tell him what went wrong. He's too small, that's what went wrong. He miscalculated the importance of a weight difference of nearly an entire man.

But I can take solace in this. You see, I am a lonely man in Boston, without any clothes, without any computer. I now know that some people are even dumber than me. □

win or lose draw

BY ANDY RODRIGUEZ

H EADLINE: LAWLER JOINS SABU & VAN DAM
IN ATTACK ON ECW!

Surprised? You shouldn't be.

How about this one: SABU ASSAULTS ECW HEAD
GORDON!

Does that surprise you? If it does, you haven't been paying too much attention. ECW is the land of surprises, or actually not. If everything's a surprise, then nothing's a surprise.

So I'm not surprised by these latest shenanigans. But I am disgusted by them.

I'm disgusted by the actual violence. More than that, though, I'm disgusted because I thought ECW, despite all its craziness, had some integrity. I thought ECW wrestlers would all stick up for their own. Instead, two of them succumbed to the enticements of the so-called "King."

For Lawler's part, he's just being his same old nasty self. Bored by announcing in the WWF, he's lashing out against an organization that has shown some gutsy independence from the WWF and WCW. With Vince McMahon's approval, he's picking a fight with the smaller kid of the block, hoping to push him around a little.

Until recently, that "little kid" has stood up to Lawler and spit in his eye. That's something to admire, even if you aren't too crazy about ECW's style.

Then Lawler devised a scheme to turn out the lights at ECW Arena. Van Dam and Sabu went along with him. So did Bill Alfonso. Tommy Dreamer was pummeled. So were half a dozen other ECW wrestlers. By the end of the night, ECW was in turmoil.

Three weeks later, Lawler, Van Dam, Sabu, and Alfonso pulled the same act. This time, they got

Dreamer, The Sandman, and a few others. In this venture, they were accompanied by the always-opportunistic Jim Cornette. In the short term, Lawler had succeeded. He's made the organization look like it doesn't know what it's doing and can't deal with a threat from the outside.

ECW wrestlers will tell you that they're more united than ever, that even those who are feuding inside ECW are willing to band together to deal with Lawler, Sabu, Van Dam, Alfonso, and Cornette. But Shane Douglas has already said he has no interest in getting involved in this little war, and if someone like Sabu, who for years was the star of ECW, is willing to fight against the promotion, who's to say others won't join Lawler's side?

"It's really confusing now," said ECW rookie Chris Chetti. "Guys talk about being together, but there's some doubt there. I'm not sure I know who I can trust. I don't know."

Neither does ECW Commissioner Tod Gordon. It's Gordon who has always encouraged ECW competitors to be as mean as they'd like to be, but he is unable to get a read on the current situation.

"Honestly, I thought Lawler would come in here and

(Continued on page 46)



Even though extreme violence is commonplace in ECW, it was shocking to see Sabu legdrop Tod Gordon, the ECW commissioner, through a table. Sabu, it appears, is out to destroy the organization in which he became a star.

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win, lose, or draw

(Continued from page 44)

Gordon was unconscious for a few minutes after Sabu attacked him. Andy Rodriguez wonders if other ECW stars might be tempted to join the side of Sabu, Rob Van Dam, and Jerry Lawler.



get booted out right on his butt," he said. "Sure, I knew some guys, like Van Dam, were dissatisfied, but I didn't expect them to go this far. I didn't expect them to cast their lot with a character like Lawler."

Just a few days after he said that, Gordon himself got caught up in the craziness, when Sabu legdropped him through a table. Gordon was taken out on a stretcher and suffered back and neck injuries. He is a victim of his own style.

"On one hand," one ECW wrestler confided, "nobody's shedding any tears for Gordon, because what did you expect? He had to know this kind of thing might happen sooner or later. No one ever gets fined for anything around here. It's anything goes. Having said that, though, the man is head of our organization. What made Sabu think he could get away with that?"

It's fairly clear that Lawler provided the spark for Sabu's actions. Which makes Lawler very happy.

"Hey, you can't pin that on me," he claimed, "but I'm glad it happened! Gordon deserved it! They say they're so extreme in ECW. Well, if they're so damn extreme, why did what Sabu did get them so upset, huh? I thought these degenerates liked that kind of stuff! That's what 'Mr. Monday Night' Rob Van Dam has been telling me."

It is true that the talented high-flyer has been deeply critical of ECW recently, but there's had been nothing in

his comments to suggest that he wanted to settle his differences by starting a revolution. Then he joined Lawler in the assault, and everything changed.

"Too many people in this federation," Van Dam said, "they think they're really good wrestlers. Fact is, only a few of us are top quality. Everybody else is just a pretender. What 'The King' is trying to do is establish that even in a lawless place like ECW, you have to separate the wheat from the chaff."

I don't accept Van Dam's assertion that there must be an ECW elite. But if I did, I would ask this: Why does Lawler have to be the man who sets the agenda? What gives him the right to come into ECW and call the shots?

"Hey, listen," Cornette said. "What gives anybody the right to do anything? This is wrestling. Jerry saw a need and he went in there and dealt with it. Some ECW guy wants to do the same to the WWF, well, let him try. I can assure you he won't be nearly as successful. Lawler is a professional. He knows exactly what he's doing."

Unfortunately, he does, and ECW is suffering for it. But I don't blame as him much as I blame Sabu and Van Dam. They accepted Lawler. They're doing it because, in the short term at least, it's good for their careers.

They built those careers, however, in ECW, in an organization that might die because of what Lawler is doing.

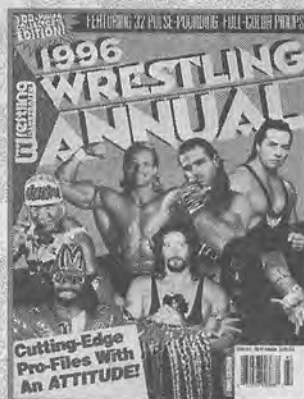
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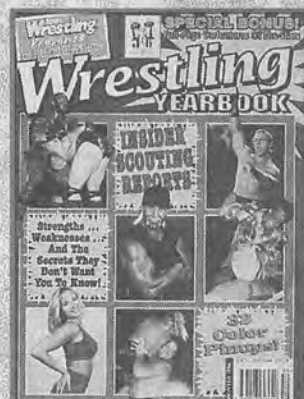
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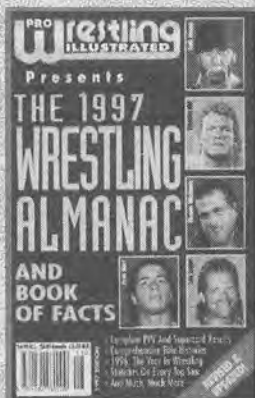
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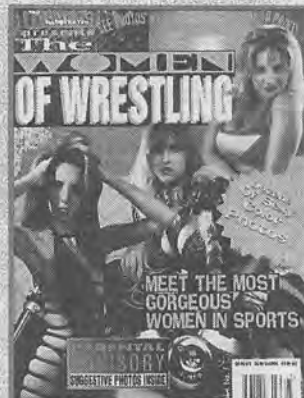
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arena reports

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UNITED STATES

CALIFORNIA

SAN JOSE—WWF at the Arena: Leif Cassidy defeated Bob Holly ... The Blackjacks beat Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon ... Rockabilly beat Jesse James ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley beat Goldust ... The Road Warriors beat Crush & Savio Vega ... Mankind defeated Rocky Maivia ... Faarooq defeated Ahmed Johnson (Ken Shamrock was the special guest referee) ... Steve Austin & The Undertaker beat Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith by disqualification. (05-30-97)

—Nancy Reliford

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO—WCW Monday Nitro at the United Center: Glacier defeated Mortis ... Dean Malenko beat Chavo Guerrero Jr. by submission ... Super Calo defeated La Parka ... Harlem Heat defeated The Amazing French-Canadians ... Cruiserweight champ Syxx beat Rey Mysterio Jr. by submission ... Ultimo Dragon pinned Chris Jericho ... Scott Norton & Marcus Bagwell beat Steve McMichael & Jeff Jarrett when McMichael turned against Jarrett. (06-16-97)

—Matthew Duffield

MOLINE—WCW Great American Bash pay-per-view at the Mark at the Quad: Ultimo Dragon defeated Psicosis by submission ... Harlem Heat defeated Rick & Scott Steiner by disqualification when Vincent interfered. Harlem Heat thus earned a shot at the World tag team title ... Konnan defeated Hugh Morris ... Glacier pinned Wrath ... World Women's champ Akira Hokuto beat Madusa. In accordance with a prematch stipulation, Madusa must now retire ... Chris Benoit defeated Meng by submission ... Kevin Greene pinned Steve McMichael after Jeff Jarrett accidentally hit McMichael with a steel briefcase ... World tag team champions Scott Hall & Kevin Nash defeated Ric Flair & Roddy Piper ... Randy Savage pinned "Diamond" Dallas Page after

Scott Hall interfered and used an "Outsiders' Edge" on Page. (06-15-97)

—Matthew Duffield

KENTUCKY

LOUISVILLE—IWA at the Derby Sports Arena: War Machine II beat Tower of Doom ... War Machine I beat Phoenix ... Terik the Great defeated American Kickboxer to regain the lightweight title ... Major Mitch Ryder pinned Blaze ... Bull Pain defeated Blaze ... Madman Pondo, Ox Harley, & Axl Rotten defeated Doug Gilbert & PG-13. (06-05-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

LOUISIANA

MORGAN CITY—Mid-South Wrestling at the Auditorium: Doink defeated Gary Nations ... Little Farmer John beat Chief Lone Eagle ... The S & S Express defeated The Infernos ... Crazy Cajun defeated Kevin Northcutt by disqualification ... Bob Armstrong beat Mr. Wrestling III by disqualification ... Robert Gibson & Scott Armstrong defeated Hard Time Inc. (06-15-97)

—Brett Wolfe

MAINE

PORTLAND—WWF at the Cumberland County Civic Center: D-Lo Brown beat Flash Funk ... The Headbangers defeated Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon ... Brian Pillman defeated Jesse James ... Henry & Phineas Godwin beat The New Blackjacks ... Goldust defeated Rockabilly ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley defeated Scott Taylor ... Ahmed Johnson beat Savio Vega ... Steve Austin, Shawn Michaels, & Sid Vicious defeated Owen Hart, Jim Neidhart, & Davey Boy Smith. (06-07-97)

—Phillip Laine

MARYLAND

BALTIMORE—Mid-Eastern Wrestling Federation at the Teamster Auditorium: Bad Crew I beat Cueball Carmichael ... Quinn Nash pinned Jimmy Cicero to win the Mid-Atlantic title ... Knuckles Zandwich beat Joe Thunder by disqualification ... The Blue Meanie & Earl the Pearl defeated Disco Inferno & Impostor Earl the Pearl ... Adam Flash pinned Steve Corino ... Mark Schrader & Devon Storm beat Julio Sanchez & Bobby Starr ... The Headbangers defeated Buddy Landell & Salvatore Sincere ... The Sandman beat Corporal Punishment, Axl Rotten, and New Jack in a four-way steel cage match. (06-01-97)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

MASSACHUSETTS

REVERE—Extreme Championship Wrestling at Wonderland Greyhound Park: Shane Douglas defeated Chris Chetti ... PG-13 beat Spike Dudley & Mikey Whipwreck ... Axl Rotten defeated Bob Duncum Jr. ... TV champ Taz defeated Louie Spicolli in 28 seconds ... Chris Candido beat B. Mahoney ... Tag team champs Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley defeated John Kronus, Tracey Smothers & Little Guido, and The Pit Bulls in a four-way match ... Rob Van Dam & Sabu defeated The Sandman & Tommy Dreamer. (06-21-97)

—Jay Rockland

WALTHAM—ECW at the I.B.E.W. Hall: Chris Chetti beat Danny Morrison ... Axl Rotten beat Roadkill ... Mikey Whipwreck & Spike Dudley beat PG-13 ... Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley defeated tag team champion Eliminator John Kronus in a handicap match to win the title ... Shane Douglas, Chris Candido, & Bam Bam Bigelow defeated B. Mahoney & The Pit Bulls ... Tommy Dreamer defeated Bobby Duncum Jr. ... Tracey Smothers beat "Hollywood" Nova ... Rob Van Dam & Sabu wrestled The Pit Bulls to a no-contest ... Tommy Dreamer beat Louie Spicolli in an "I Quit" match. (06-20-97)

—Rich Palladino

BOSTON—WCW Monday Nitro at the FleetCenter: Mortis pinned Glacier in a non-televized match ... Super Calo, Ultimo Dragon, & Juventud Guerrera beat Psicosis, La Parka, & Silver King ... Alex Wright defeated Chris Jericho ... World Women's champ Akira Hokuto defeated Malia Hosaka ... Steve McMichael wrestled Konnan to a no-contest when McMichael was attacked by Kevin Greene ... Lex Luger defeated World champ Hulk Hogan by submission to the "torture rack" in a non-title match ... Jeff Jarrett pinned U.S. champ Dean Malenko to win the title after Eddy Guerrero interfered ... World tag team champs Scott Hall & Kevin Nash wrestled Ric Flair & Roddy Piper to a double-disqualification. (06-09-97)

—Matthew Duffield & Chris & Jeff Norwood

LOWELL—WWF at the Memorial Auditorium: Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon beat The Headbangers ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley defeated Scott Taylor ... The New Blackjacks defeated Henry & Phineas Godwin ... D-Lo Brown beat Flash Funk ... Brian Pillman beat Jesse James ... Ahmed Johnson defeated Savio Vega ... Steve Austin, Shawn Michaels, & Sid Vicious

beat Owen Hart, Jim Neidhart, & Davey Boy Smith.
(06-06-97)

—Barry Darwin

NEW JERSEY

VINELAND—NWA at the High School: Rick Scarpa beat Twiggy Ramirez ... Rocco Dorsey defeated Doink the Clown ... Don Montoya beat Ralph Soto ... The Misfits beat The Beach Bullies for the U.S. tag team title ... Rik Ratchett pinned Dr. Dan ... Reckless Youth defeated North American champ Ace Darling to win the title ... NWA champ Dan Severn defeated Devon Storm by submission ... Buddy Landell pinned Doug Gilbert in a streetfight.
(06-14-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

NEW YORK

UNIONDALE—WWF at Nassau Coliseum: Scott Taylor defeated Aldo Montoya ... Rockabilly beat Flash Funk ... Brian Pillman defeated Jesse Jammes ... Henry & Phineas Godwinn wrestled The Road Warriors to a double-disqualification ... Mankind beat Hunter Hearst Helmsley by disqualification when Chyna interfered ... Faarooq & Kama Mustafa beat The Headbangers ... The Undertaker & Ken Shamrock beat Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith.
(06-22-97)

—Ronald Brett

OGDENSBURG—WCW at the Golden Dome: Marcus Bagwell defeated Scotty Riggs ... Hacksaw Duggan defeated M. Wall Street ... U.S. champion Dean Malenko defeated Rey Misterio Jr. ... The Giant beat Roadblock ... Rick & Scott Steiner beat Harlem Heat ... "Diamond" Dallas Page defeated Randy Savage.
(06-07-97)

—Rick Greggson

BUFFALO—WCW's "Legends II: A Tribute To Ilio DiPaolo" card at the Marine Midland Arena: Gino Brito & Tony Parisi defeated Greg Valentine & Dory Funk Jr. by disqualification ... U.S. champ Dean Malenko beat Alex Wright by submission ... Rick & Scott Steiner beat Public Enemy ... Chris Benoit beat Meng by countout ... Dallas Page pinned Randy Savage after former Buffalo Bills quarterback Jim Kelly interfered and hit Savage with two elbowdrops ... Rey Misterio Jr. wrestled U.S. champ Dean Malenko to a draw ... World tag team champs Scott Hall & Kevin Nash beat Lex Luger & The Giant by disqualification.
(06-06-97)

—Dan Murphy

NORTH CAROLINA

SYLVA—Southeastern Wrestling Alliance at the Armory: Stan Brown pinned The Eliminator ... TV champ John Owen wrestled Dan Cooley to a draw ... Jay Eagle & Cherokee Renegade defeated Billy Badd & Ox Brubaker ... Jimmy Valiant, Chris Cannon, Ricky Rocket, Abe Jacobs Jr., & Denny Cooley beat K.C. Thunder, Frank Anderson, The Executioner, The Carolina Heartbreaker, & The Skinhead in a "Doomsday" match.
(06-21-97)

—Allan Barrie

MORGANTON—PWF at the National Guard Armory: Gladiator II defeated Wasted Youth ... The Black Dragons defeated tag team champi-

ons Masked Maniac & Flaming Youth to win the title ... Junior heavyweight champion Madd Maxxine (with Mama Maxxine) defeated Hurricane Hugo ... Terry Austin defeated Black Dragon I in a tournament final to win the vacant Eastern States title ... Heavyweight champion Italian Stallion beat George South.
(06-20-97)

—Brock Chandler

ELKIN—AIWF at the Armory: "War Zone/Iron Man" tournament, first-round matches: Aries defeated Cyclone ... J.T. Sledge beat Jammer ... In other matches: King Cobra defeated Gemini by disqualification ... Light heavyweight champion Robert Roma beat Jackie Anderson ... Neil Leathers beat Rick Deeze in a bullepo match ... U.S. champ Brian Danzig beat Chris Windham ... Tag team champions The Tennessee Violence Authority defeated The Family of Darkness ... Heavyweight champion Major Havoc beat Johnny Reb.
(06-14-97)

—Dean Puckett

JONESVILLE—National Wrestling Council's "Friday The 13th Screamfest" at Big Bob's Game Room: Commando pinned The American Warrior ... Hellfire & Brimstone defeated The Gladiators by disqualification ... Fury beat Condor ... Rage beat Falcon by submission ... G.Q. Smooth beat The Shadow for the East Coast title in a tournament final ... NWC champ D.C. Queen pinned Bobby James ... The Army of Aggression won a tag team battle royal to win the vacant tag team title.
(06-13-97)

—Duran Craig

MOORESBORO—Championship Wrestling Federation at the Mooresboro Gym: Surge defeated The Big Fist Brawler ... Cruiserweight champion Champain defeated Kyoki Shinobi ... Sweet Dreams beat Colt Justice ... The Big Fist Brawler beat Dream Machine ... High Performance beat Legion ... Heavyweight champion Venom wrestled Surge to a double-countout.
(06-12-97)

—Dan Parris & Amy Tucker

OHIO

DAYTON—WCW Monday Nitro at the Hara Arena: Glacier defeated Alex Wright ... Marcus Bagwell beat Joe Gomez ... Prince Iaukea beat Hugh Morris ... Masa Chono & Keiji Muto beat Rick & Scott Steiner ... U.S. champ Dean Malenko beat M. Wall Street ... Ciclope & Damian defeated Harlem Heat ... Chris Benoit defeated The Barbarian by submission ... Ric Flair defeated Scott Hall by disqualification.
(06-02-97)

—Marisa James

COLUMBUS—WWF at the Convention Center: Lef Cassidy defeated Bob Holly ... The Blackjacks beat Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon ... Rockabilly beat Jesse James ... Mankind defeated Rocky Malvia ... Goldust defeated Hunter Hearst Helmsley ... The Road Warriors beat Crush & Savio Vega ... Faarooq defeated Ahmed Johnson (Ken Shamrock was the special guest referee) ... Steve Austin & The Undertaker defeated Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith by disqualification.
(06-01-97)

—Brad Musser

(Continued on page 50)

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arena reports

(Continued from page 49)

LORAIN—ASWF at the Eagle's Nest: **Batman** defeated **Jose Perez** ... **J.T. Lightning** wrestled **K.C. Stryker** to a double-disqualification ... **Johnny Paradise** won the vacant ASWF heavy-weight title in a battle royal ... **Terminal Punishment** defeated **The Batten Twins** ... Light heavyweight champ **Rod Destiny** defeated **Shane Byreley** in a ladder match ... A four-corners match between **Tommy Rich**, **Biff Beverly**, **Johnny Paradise**, and **Mad Dog Mercy** was stopped due to excessive bleeding. (05-31-97)

—Sam Farmer

PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA—WWF at the CoreStates Center: **Flash Funk** pinned **Rockabilly** ... **Scott Taylor** beat **Aldo Montoya** ... **Farooq & Kama Mustafa** defeated **The Headbangers** ... **Brian Pillman** beat **Jesse James** ... **The Road Warriors** wrestled **Henry & Phineas Godwin** to a double-disqualification ... **Big Van Vader** pinned **Goldust** ... **Mankind** defeated **Hunter Hearst Helmsley** by disqualification ... **Ken Shamrock & The Undertaker** beat **Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith**. (06-20-97)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

ALLENTOWN—ECW at Ag Hall: **Tommy Rich** pinned **Chris Chetti** ... **Mikey Whipwreck** & **Spike Dudley** defeated **PG-13** ... **The Pit Bulls** defeated **Axl Rotten & Bobby Duncum Jr.** ... **John Kronus** defeated **Tracy Smothers & Little Guido** in a handicap match ... **Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley** defeated **B. Mahoney & The Sandman** ... **Shane Douglas** pinned **Tommy Dreamer** in a falls-count-anywhere-in-Allentown match ... **Sabu & Rob Van Dam** defeated **Chris Candido & Taz**. (06-13-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

PHILADELPHIA—ECW at the ECW Arena: TV champ **Shane Douglas** defeated **Chris Chetti** ... **The Pit Bulls** beat **Little Guido & Tracey Smothers** ... **Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley** defeated **The Sandman & B. Mahoney** ... Heavyweight champ **Terry Funk** defeated **Chris Candido** ... **Tommy Dreamer** pinned **Raven** in a loser-leaves-ECW match ... **Sabu** pinned **Taz** ... **Taz** defeated TV champ **Shane Douglas** to win the title ... Tag team champs **The Eliminators** beat **Buh Buh Ray & D-Von Dudley**. (06-07-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

WIND GAP—Pennsylvania Championship Wrestling at the Middle School: **Joe Rules** pinned **Pat Shamrock** ... **Tiger Khan** beat **Chris Krueger** ... **Inferno Kid** defeated **Dave Patera** by disqualification ... **Boogie Woogie Brown** pinned **Chef D.Z. Gillespie** ... **Bob Holly** beat **Glen Osbourne** by disqualification ... **Reckless Youth** wrestled **Julio Sanchez** to a double-countout ... **Judd the Stud** beat **Capt. Lou Albano** in a boxing match ... **Boogie Woogie Brown & Inferno Kid** defeated **Col. Jihad Hussein & Dave Patera** ... PCW champ **Cheetah Master** beat **Mr. Ooh La La** ... The Americas title was held up after a controversial

match between champ **Bart Gunn** and **Ace Darling** in which several men interfered. PCW Commissioner **Blaine DeSantis** then ordered a tag team match between **Gunn & Bob Holly** and **Darling & Glen Osbourne** be held, with the man getting the pinfall being declared champ. **Gunn** regained the title by pinning **Darling**. (06-07-97)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

READING—PCW TV taping at the Cloister (highlights): **Tiger Khan** beat **Rockin' Ronnie** ... **Boogie Woogie Brown** pinned **Viper** ... **Inferno Kid & Mike Quackenbush** beat **Dave Patera & Mr. Ooh La La** ... **Chef D.Z. Gillespie** beat **Pat Shamrock** ... **Bob Holly** pinned **Ace Darling** ... **Julio Sanchez** wrestled **Reckless Youth** to a double-disqualification ... **Capt. Lou Albano** beat **Judd the Stud** in a boxing match ... **Cheetah Master** beat **Col. Jihad Hussein** ... **Julio Sanchez & Cheetah Master** beat **Chef D.Z. Gillespie, Col. Jihad Hussein, Mr. Ooh La La, & Dave Patera** in a handicap match ... Americas champ **Bart Gunn** beat **Glen Osbourne**. (06-06-97)

—Michael J. DiMuzio

SCRANTON—ECW at the CYC: **Spike Dudley** defeated **Chris Chetti** ... **Taz** defeated **Mikey Whipwreck** ... **John Kronus** defeated **Little Guido & Tracey Smothers** in a handicap match ... TV champ **Shane Douglas** pinned **Pit Bull II** ... **Chris Candido** pinned **Raven** ... **Louie Spicolli** defeated **Tommy Dreamer** in a lumberjack match ... **Buh Buh Ray Dudley** pinned **B. Mahoney** ... **The Sandman** beat **D-Von Dudley**. (06-06-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

CARMICHAELS—Pro Wrestling Xpress at the High School: **The Boogie Man** beat **PWX champ T. Rantula** by disqualification ... **Col. Payne** pinned **Notorious Norm** ... **J.B. Destiny** beat **Mad Mike** ... **Gator** battled TV champ **Lou Marconi** to a double-countout ... **Black Cat** beat **Country Boy Chris** ... **Scott Blaze** beat **Bonecrusher** ... TV champ **Lou Marconi** beat **Brian Anthony**. (05-31-97)

—Jim Miller & Jeff Gorman

RHODE ISLAND

PROVIDENCE—WWF King of the Ring pay-per-view at the Civic Center: **The Headbangers** beat **Bart Gunn & Jesse James** in a match not shown on the pay-per-view ... **Goldust** beat **Crush** ... **Owen Hart, Jim Neidhart, & Davey Boy Smith** beat **The Road Warriors** and **Sid Vicious** when **Hart** pinned **Sid** ... **Shawn Michaels** and **Steve Austin** battled to a no-contest ... World champion **The Undertaker** pinned **Farooq** after a "tombstone" piledriver ... **King of the Ring tournament semifinal matches**: **Hunter Hearst Helmsley** pinned **Ahmed Johnson** after a "pedigree" ... **Mankind** forced **Jerry Lawler** to submit to the mandible claw ... **King of the Ring tournament final**: **Hunter Hearst Helmsley** pinned **Mankind**. (06-08-97)

—Vincent Robey

SOUTH CAROLINA

GREENVILLE—Southern Championship Wrestling at the Hammet Street Auction VFW Club: **Lance**

Gaylord beat **Jebidiah Beauragard** ... **Rock Jordan** defeated **Steve Stampede** ... **Sweet Dreams** beat **Purple Haze** ... **J.J. Justice** beat **Randy Sanchez** for the cruiserweight title ... **The Stray Cats** defeated **Mikki Free & J.W. Steele**, **Freedom Fighter & Johnny Dollar**, and **Cruiser & Snake Lewis** in a four-corners elimination match ... **The Nightmare** defeated **Colt Justice** in a lumberjack match. (06-21-97)

—Dan Parris

TENNESSEE

NASHVILLE—North American All-Star Wrestling at the Stock-Yard Pavilion: **Scufflin' Hillbilly** defeated **Keith Arden** ... **Ken Arden** beat **The Blue Angel** ... **Trailer Park Trash** defeated **Jerry Faith** ... **Billy Briggs & Bert Prentice** defeated **Farren Foxx & Paul Adams** when **Prentice** pinned **Adams** after a big splash ... **Colorado Kid & Scufflin' Hillbilly** beat tag team champions **The Centerfolds** in a non-title match. (06-21-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

NASHVILLE—NAASW at the Stock-Yard Pavilion: **Scufflin' Hillbilly** defeated **Kevin Jones** ... **The Centerfolds** defeated **Doug Gilbert & J.C. Ice** to win the tag team championship after **Gilbert** turned against **Ice** ... **Farren Foxx** beat **Billy Briggs** by disqualification in a match in which fans served as lumberjacks ... **Colorado Kid** beat **Tom Burton** ... **Bill Dundee** beat **Wolfie D.**. (06-10-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

FALL BRANCH—Southern States Wrestling at the Sampson Center: **Danny Christian** pinned **Brooklyn Bad Boy II** ... **Brian Logan** beat **Brooklyn Bad Boy I** ... **James McHone** pinned **Five Dollar Bill** in five seconds in a referee vs. manager match ... **Debbie Combs** beat **Brandi Wine** ... **Appalachian champ Beau James** beat **Brian Logan** by disqualification. (06-20-97)

—Allan Barrie

MEMPHIS—USWA at the Big One Expo Center: **Tony Williams** beat **Bulldog Raines** ... **Paul Diamond** defeated **Mike Samples** ... **Dutch Mantel** beat **Gypsy Joe** ... **The New Razor Ramon** wrestled to a double-countout with **The New Diesel** ... **Nick Dinsmore & Flash Flanagan** defeated **Tank & Recon** ... **Billy Travis** beat Southern champ **Brian Christopher** to win the title ... Heavyweight champion **Jerry Lawler** wrestled **Tommy Dreamer** to a no-contest. (06-14-97)

—Mark Mitchell

KNOXVILLE—Tennessee Mountain Wrestling at the Armory: **Sammy V** beat **John T. Coleminer** ... **Jeff Anderson** defeated **Johnny Raynor** ... **Tim Reed** beat **Mike Powers** by disqualification ... **Chris Powers & Ricky Rocket** beat **Dr. Dan & The Orderly** ... **Tony Anthony** beat **Buddy Landell**. (06-07-97)

—Bill Needham

McMINNVILLE—Hardcore Championship Wrestling at Jake's Auction Barn: Gary Valiant and Kenny Arden wrestled to a draw ... Troy Eaton & Vandy Fuels defeated Jason & Tony Falk by countout ... The Colorado Kid pinned Farren Foxx ... Larry Valentine defeated The Scorpion by disqualification ... HCW champion Ashley Hudson defeated Dante by disqualification when Cat Taylor, Dante's manager, interfered ... Cool Breeze beat Mark Gordy in a dog-collar match. (05-30-97)

—Steve Bryant

VIRGINIA

BASSETT—A1WF at the Community Center: "War Zone/Iron Man" tournament, first-round matches: Red Scorpion defeated E.Z. Ryder ... Johnny Reb beat Neil Leathers ... Non-tournament matches: Jammer beat Brett Deville ... J.T. Sledge beat The Phantom ... The Gods of War beat Iron Horse & Desperado ... TV champ Rick Deezel beat King Cobra ... Cyclone defeated Bodycount ... U.S. champ Brian Danzig beat Robert Roma ... The Ghost Riders beat tag team champs The Tennessee Violence Authority by disqualification. (06-21-97)

—Dean Puckett

WINCHESTER—MECW at the Farmers' Livestock Exchange Arena: Todd Justice defeated Mr. Ref in a hair vs. mask steel cage match ... Joey Matthews wrestled Christian York to a draw ... Gutter Boy beat Jimmy Cicero by reverse decision disqualification ... Skank beat Julio Sanchez by disqualification ... Fantasia pinned Big E. Sleaze in a mixed gender match ... John Rambo & Salvatore Sincere beat Julio Sanchez & Jimmy Cicero. (06-20-97)

—Timothy A. Walker

WASHINGTON

TACOMA—WWF at the Tacoma Dome: Lelf Cassidy beat Bob Holly ... The Blackjacks beat Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon ... Rockabilly beat Jesse James ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley beat Goldust ... Mankind beat Rocky Maivia ... The Road Warriors defeated Crush & Savio Vega ... Faarooq defeated Ahmed Johnson (Ken Shamrock was the special guest referee) ... Steve Austin & The Undertaker beat Owen Hart & Davey Boy Smith by disqualification. (05-31-97)

—George Davidson

WEST VIRGINIA

HUNTINGDON—WWF Raw Is War broadcast at Civic Arena: Faarooq defeated Ahmed Johnson ... Intercontinental champ Owen Hart beat Bob Holly ... Goldust pinned Hunter Hearst Helmsley to earn a shot at European champ Davey Boy Smith the following week ... The Road Warriors beat World tag team champs Shawn Michaels & Steve Austin by disqualification ... Mankind beat Savio Vega in a first-round King of the Ring match ... World champ The Undertaker beat Sid Vicious. (06-02-97)

—Tina Rutland

INTERNATIONAL

CANADA

KIRKLAND, QUEBEC—Northern Championship Wrestling's "Super Bowl Of Wrestling" at the

Kirkland Arena: Marcel the Gangster of Love, Esel Krap, & Alexander the Magnificent defeated Cheethor, Pat Thompson, & Charles Thompson ... Bruiser beat Prototype ... Primus defeated Count Blood the Impaler to win the WWF heavy-weight title ... Darkman defeated Steve Rush ... Michel Piche & Johnny Krueger defeated Ronnie Krueger & The Blue Blazer ... Aphrodisia beat Naja Viper (Gino Brito was the guest referee) ... The Cult beat The Dream Warriors, Marc the Grizzly & Frank Blues, and The Cosanostra in a four-team match ... Iceman beat Golem the Giant (Gino Brito was the guest referee). (06-22-97)

—Bertrand Hebert

OTTAWA, ONTARIO—WWF at the Corel Center: Henry & Phineas Godwinn defeated The Headbangers ... Rockabilly beat Judas ... Mankind defeated Hunter Hearst Helmsley by disqualification ... Goldust defeated Faarooq ... The New Blackjacks beat Savio Vega & Crush ... Owen Hart, Brian Pillman, & Davey Boy Smith defeated The Road Warriors & Ahmed Johnson when Hart pinned Hawk ... World champion The Undertaker pinned Steve Austin. (06-15-97)

—Bertrand Hebert

TORONTO, ONTARIO—WWF at the SkyDome: The Headbangers beat Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon ... Goldust pinned Rockabilly ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley beat Flash Funk ... Ahmed Johnson pinned Faarooq ... Intercontinental champ Owen Hart pinned Sid Vicious while Davey Boy Smith held Sid's leg ... Henry & Phineas Godwinn beat The New Blackjacks ... European champ Davey Boy Smith beat Mankind ... The Road Warriors defeated Savio Vega & Crush (Ken Shamrock was guest referee) ... World champ The Undertaker beat Steve Austin. (06-14-97)

—Jerome Samson

MONTREAL, QUEBEC—WWF at the Molson Centre: Doug Furnas & Phil Lafon defeated The Headbangers ... Mankind beat Rockabilly ... Hunter Hearst Helmsley defeated Flash Funk ... Davey Boy Smith beat Sid Vicious ... Ahmed Johnson defeated Faarooq ... The New Blackjacks defeated Henry & Phineas Godwinn ... Intercontinental champion Owen Hart beat Goldust ... The Road Warriors defeated Crush & Judas ... World champ The Undertaker beat Davey Boy Smith (substituting for Steve Austin, who had transportation problems). After the match, Austin attacked both men. (06-13-97)

—Bertrand Hebert

JOLIETTE, QUEBEC—NCW's Challenge Mania V at the Joliette Arena: Black Bear, Pat Thompson, & Black Eagle defeated The Playboy, Frankie the Mobster, & Raiden ... Marc the Grizzly beat Mike Lyons to regain the Inter-city title ... The Cult defeated tag team champions The Sweet Boys to win the belts ... Dream Killer beat Golem the Giant in a falls-count-anywhere match ... Daniel Leon beat Esel Krap ... The Dream Warriors beat El Diablero & Jason ... Quebec champ Iceman beat Frank Blues. (06-07-97)

—Bertrand Hebert

BEAUHARNOIS, QUEBEC—NCW at the Civic Center: The Playboy & Frankie the Mobster defeated Black Eagle & Pat Thompson ... The

Cult defeated The Sweet Boys by disqualification ... Golem the Giant beat Dream Killer ... Marc the Grizzly beat The Super Headhunters in a handicap match ... The Dream Warriors beat El Diablero & The Ninja ... Iceman beat Frank Blues to win the Quebec title. (05-31-97)

—Bertrand Hebert

GERMANY

OBERHAUSEN—WCW at the Sporthalle: Alex Wright defeated Hugh Morris ... Madusa beat Luna Vachon ... Rick & Scott Steiner beat Harlem Heat ... Rey Misterio Jr. defeated Dean Malenko ... Dallas Page beat M. Wall Street ... Chris Benoit defeated Meng ... The Giant & Lex Luger beat World tag team champions Scott Hall & Kevin Nash by disqualification. (06-21-97)

—Klaus Christiansen

HAMBURG—WCW at the Sporthalle: Rey Misterio Jr. pinned Steven Regal ... Madusa pinned Luna Vachon ... Alex Wright pinned Hugh Morris ... Rick & Scott Steiner defeated Harlem Heat ... Dallas Page beat M. Wall Street by disqualification ... Chris Benoit pinned Meng ... Dean Malenko beat cruiserweight champ Syxx by disqualification ... The Giant & Lex Luger beat World tag team champs Scott Hall & Kevin Nash by disqualification. (06-19-97)

—Johan Gherman

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY DECEMBER

ILLINOIS

CHICAGO—WWA at the International Amphitheatre: The Professor pinned Ken Dillinger ... Baron Von Raschke pinned Danny Miller ... Bull Bullinski pinned Treach Phillips ... Lars Anderson beat Moose Cholak by disqualification ... Crusher beat Ray Stevens by countout ... The Blackjacks defeated Bruiser & Dr. X by disqualification. (12-11-70)

—Ronald Gannal

NEW YORK

NEW YORK—WWWF at Madison Square Garden: World champion Bruno Sammartino pinned Tank Morgan in a best-of-three-falls match ... Bobo Brazil, Argentina Apollo, & Antonio Pugliese beat El Toro, Baron Scicluna, & Dr. Bill Miller ... The Sheik pinned Ricky Sexton ... Bulldog Brower pinned Miguel Perez ... Spiros Arion beat Smasher Sloan ... Luke Graham beat Louis Cerdan ... Armande Hussein defeated Tony Nero ... Angelo Savoldi beat Roberto Gonzalez. (12-12-66)

—PWI archives

TEXAS

FORT WORTH—World Class Championship Wrestling at the Will Rogers Coliseum: Matt Borne beat Mark Youngblood ... Brian Adias & Al Madril defeated tag team champions The Dingo Warrior & Lance Von Erich to win the title ... Black Bart beat Scott Casey in a bullrope match ... Tony Atlas defeated Crusher Yurkov by disqualification to win the TV title ... Mike Von Erich defeated Master Gee. (12-01-86)

—Pete Munley



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by White Rose (1995)

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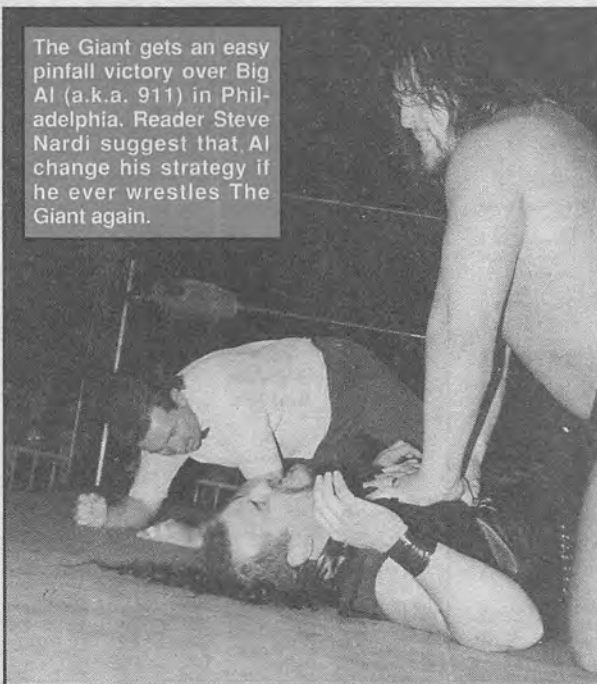
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4555/07-97

between falls

(Continued from page 5)

The Giant gets an easy pinfall victory over Big Al (a.k.a. 911) in Philadelphia. Reader Steve Nardi suggest that Al change his strategy if he ever wrestles The Giant again.



Giant, on the other hand, is accustomed to facing monsters, as he has defeated competitors like Roadblock, Hulk Hogan, Kevin Nash, and Lex Luger.

If Big Al wants to regain his dignity in a rematch with The Giant, he should consider learning some arm-bars and leglocks to reduce his rival's advantages. And, most importantly, he shouldn't provoke The Giant's wrath by doing something stupid like slapping him in the face.

STEVE NARDI
West Berlin, NJ

ANNOUNCER OF THE YEAR

If PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED had an award for Announcer of the Year in the year-end issue, I think Jim Ross would win it hands down. It's so refreshing to hear knowledgeable, unbiased commentary from a WWF announcer, something I'm not used to.

At a recent *Raw Is War* broadcast from Evansville, Indiana, the normally despised Jerry Lawler was cheered tremendously during his match with Goldust. Ross explained Lawler's

popularity in Evansville by noting that the USWA, in which Lawler is a hero, ran weekly cards in that city for more than 20 years.

I also know many younger fans weren't aware of the past history of Faarooq until Ross reminded the WWF audience of his accomplishments as Ron Simmons. And who didn't enjoy Ross' delightfully candid interviews with Goldust and Man-kind? It is my opinion that Jim Ross has more than made up for the dreadful Fake Diesel

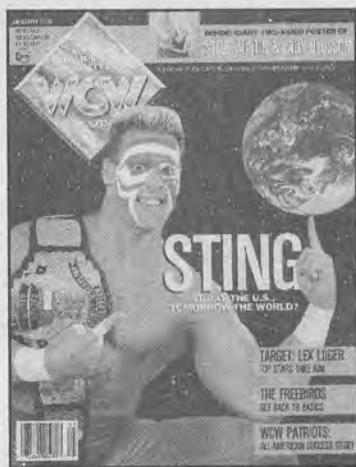
and Razor Ramon fiasco by becoming the best announcer this sport has ever seen.

Now if we could only get rid of Bobby Heenan and Dusty Rhodes ...

DAVID MILLER
Oaktown, IN ☐



PWI does not have an award for Announcer of the Year, but if we did, reader David Miller would certainly cast his vote for the WWF's Jim Ross.



JUST FOUND!

BACK ISSUES OF THE ORIGINAL WCW MAGAZINE

Collectors agree that the early issues of WCW MAGAZINE were some of the most superb wrestling magazines ever published. Until recently, these magazines had been neatly stored in an air-controlled warehouse. Now, once again, they are available to the public!

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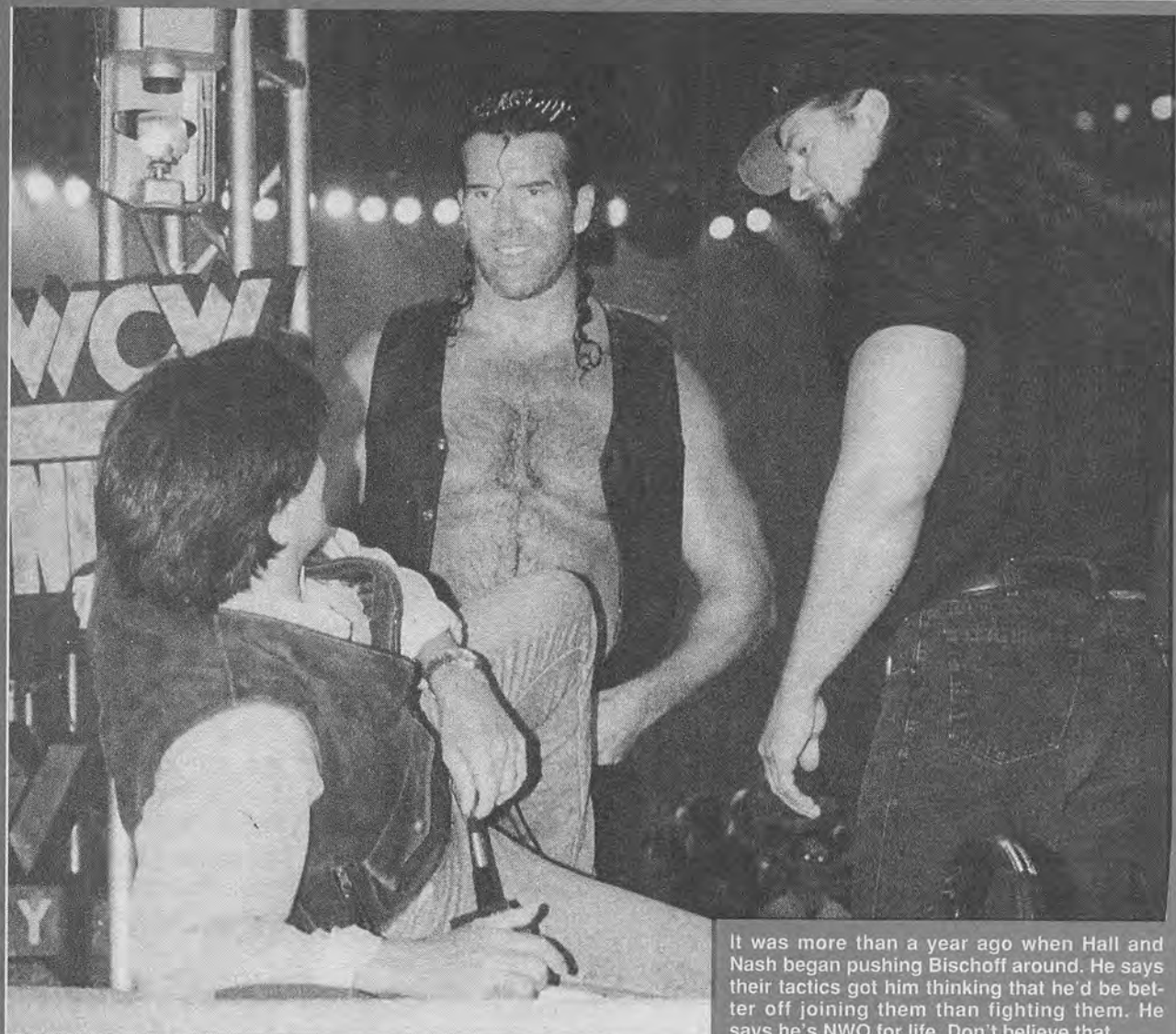
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WCW MAGAZINE

(Continued from page 21)



It was more than a year ago when Hall and Nash began pushing Bischoff around. He says their tactics got him thinking that he'd be better off joining them than fighting them. He says he's NWO for life. Don't believe that.

long as there's an NWO, which is forever."

Others, however, suggested that when Hogan's away in Hollywood, Bischoff exercises very little power because most members won't even listen to him. And there were even suggestions that Hogan was disappointed with the way Bischoff handled recent internal NWO squabbles. Everyone, after all, noticed that when Lex Luger and The Giant stormed the ring to attack Hogan and Bischoff at the July 7 *Nitro* and Luger put

Bischoff in the "rack," Hogan made no effort to help him.

"Bischoff can't keep us together," an NWO member said. "He can only tear us apart."

Bischoff refused to comment on what he called "anonymous comments from unreliable sources."

"If they have a problem with me, they should say it to my face," he challenged. "I haven't heard anything, and I don't expect to hear anything. I think people respect what I've done for the

NWO in bringing it to a position of power. NWO for life, boys, and Eric Bischoff for life, too."

Don't bet on it. According to our sources, Bischoff doesn't have a written contract with the NWO and operates on a handshake agreement with Nash, Hall, and Hogan. His position within the organization was never secure, even when he was also WCW senior vice president. Without that, he can be dumped at any time. This former emperor has nothing. He's on his way out. □

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perry saturn

(Continued from page 28)

allows him to release the resentment, the anger, the anguish, the doubt. Here, he is able to forge on, floating peacefully as if atop the world in a giant hot-air balloon, so far from the turmoil, the challenges, the surgeon's scalpel.

In a few hours, he will seek this inner sanctum. Then he will visualize himself completely healed and wrestling. Oz will be vibrant and alive.

All he has to do now is get through surgery ... and rehabilitation.

JUNE 30

"I'm emotionally numb," Perry Saturn laments quietly. "There's no physical pain ... but I can put little weight on the leg."

The good news is the operation, a five-hour procedure in which Dr. Corso performed laser arthroscopic surgery in three areas around Saturn's knee, was successful.

"One scope was to shave the meniscus, which was slightly torn," ex-

plained Saturn. "One scope they put a pin in my tibia. One scope was to check my ACL to see the extent of the damage. They did have to perform major reconstructive surgery. I had a 4½-inch incision over my kneecap. When they opened me up, they took one-third of the patella tendon and rerouted it behind my kneecap and made a new ACL with that. The damage was that extensive.

"The doctor was very pleased. I was supposed to be in bed a week, but I didn't. Now I have a hematoma (deep bruise with bleeding) and the knee is swollen with blood. It won't heal until the blood drains."

The bad news is that he will be out for about a year. There is a long, steep road to recovery, including grueling rehabilitation, two hours per week at first. He started that shortly after the surgery, as doctors strived to straighten out the leg. Saturn says the motion has improved and that it is two inches from being fully straight.

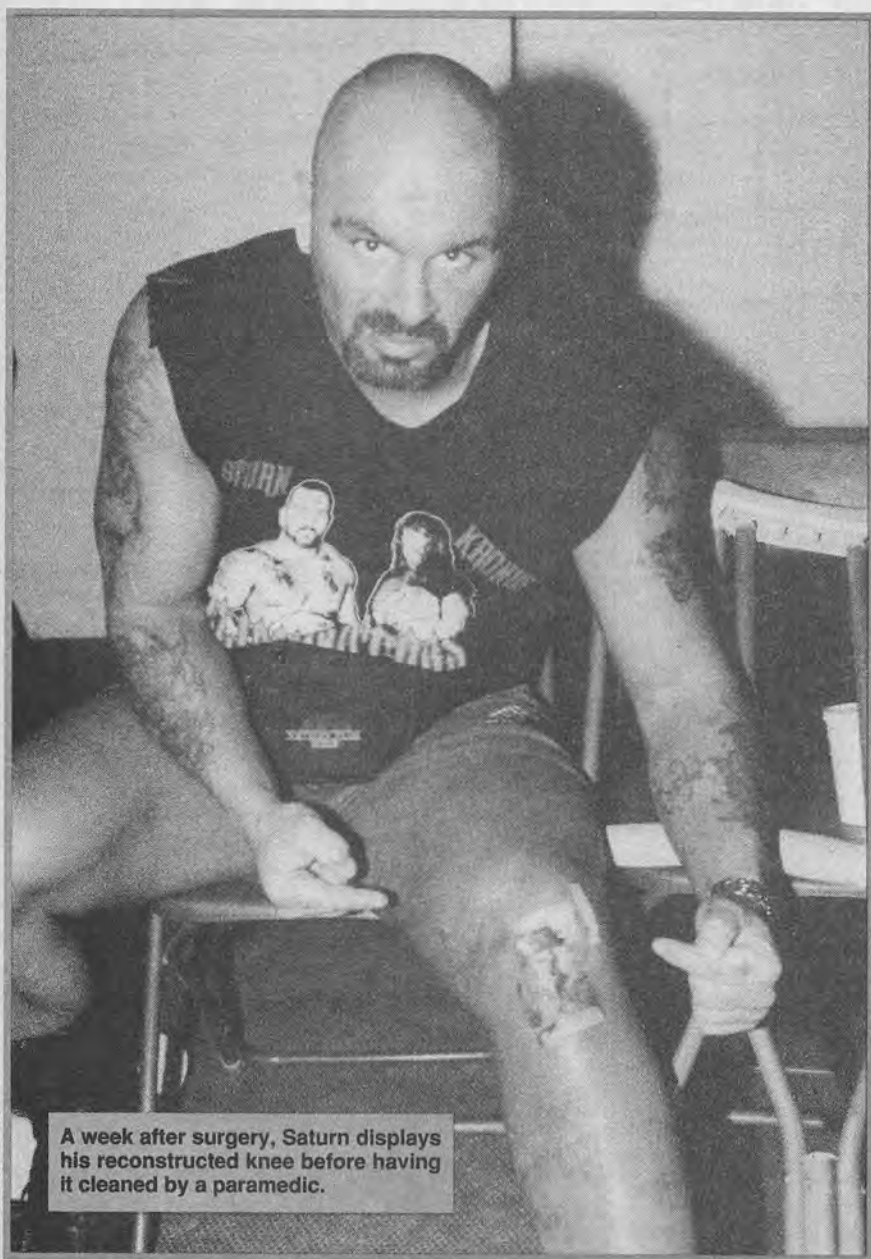
"Rehab is barely bearable," he says. "Doctors are hanging weights on it to help straighten it out. I had no idea it would be this painful. The injury was bad ... rehab is worse."

"I had been bitter the first few weeks. I lashed out at everybody. The first few weeks I hated everybody, and I tried to blame this injury on everybody."

His voice, normally serious in tone, sounds drained. The last three weeks have been like a whitewater raft race down the River Styx. During that time, he and Kronus relinquished the tag team belts to the Dudleys in a handicap match. For Saturn, he now faced his beloved sport minus the ruby slippers.

"There's got to be a light at the end of the tunnel. Adversity makes you strong. The hardest part in my life now is my emotional state. I'm an athlete and I can't participate. I can hardly walk."

It is early-afternoon, and Saturn is seated at a desk, before a phone at the ECW House of Hardcore wrestling



A week after surgery, Saturn displays his reconstructed knee before having it cleaned by a paramedic.

Photo by George Tahinos

school in Deer Park, New York. Saturn is an instructor there. Today, however, and until he is more ambulatory, his role has been reduced to that of a secretary.

"I'm fortunate—I didn't lose my job," he says.

He recognizes he is lucky because others such as Taz, Paul E. Dangerously, and Kronus have rallied to his side. ECW, Saturn says, paid for the surgery and hospitalization and will also defray the costs of rehabilitation. They are a family here in Oz.

The leg heals a bit more, day by day. Too slow for Saturn. But there is still so far to go, and Saturn knows time is not the friend of a pro wrestler. Heroes come and go like rock stars.

Still, he is confident he can return to the wrestling's apex. History, after all, has shown that Perry Saturn can do just about anything he wants to do.

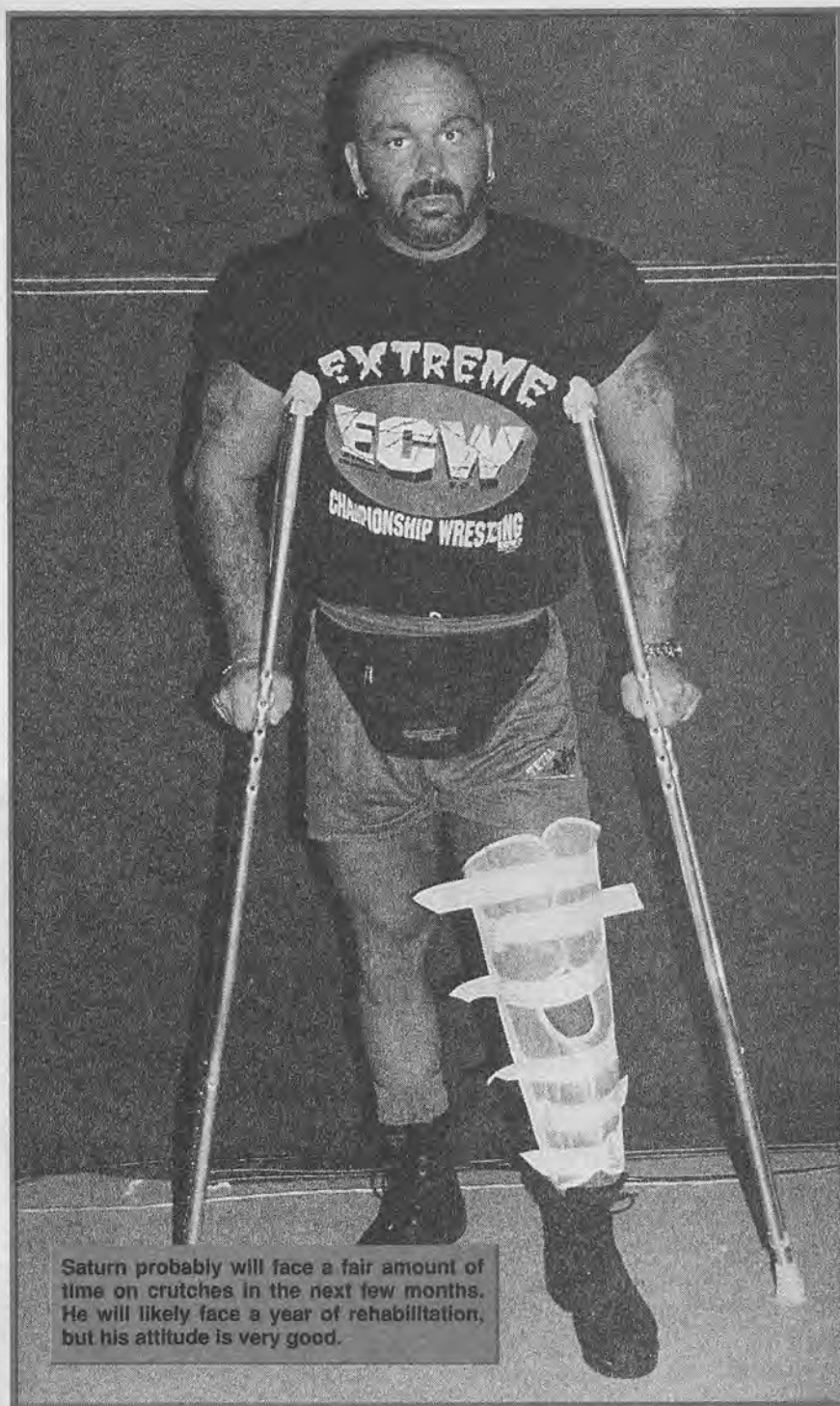
He was born and raised in Cleveland, son of Angie and a nameless, faceless father. Dad took off before Perry was born; Perry does not even know the man's name. Angie married again, to a brutal man who derived sadistic pleasure by persecuting his stepson physically and emotionally.

The family lived on a fixed income where squalor and decadence supplanted love, tenderness, and support. To survive emotionally, Saturn turned inward, became a dreamer. He pondered a life in the squared circle, where he was the wizard to the fans, dazzling them with technically brilliant moves.

He dreamed. His family laughed. A foolish dreamer, they called him. A nobody wasting everybody's time.

"I had crappy influences growing up," he said. "I did anything I could to be the opposite of them people."

From ages 13 to 17, Saturn lived mostly in detention facilities. He escaped the horrors and the abuse by introverting. Here, the seeds of his Oz began to take hold. A decade ago, Saturn moved to Boston and began training to be a pro wrestler with Killer Kowalski. Kowalski nurtured the athletic side in Saturn; Turner caressed the spiritual, emotional aspects.



Saturn probably will face a fair amount of time on crutches in the next few months. He will likely face a year of rehabilitation, but his attitude is very good.

With their help, and with grim determination, Perry Saturn was reborn.

Today, amidst the 24-hour-a-day mental battle, he looks for humor to lighten his load. He says the whimsical message about Oz on his machine is just a bit of playfulness—he has granted himself amidst the constant seriousness.

"I was just fooling around. Usually, I'm very serious. I'm trying to find

humor in everything. Maybe this week I'll change the message to the Psychic Hotline Network."

Don't think for a moment levity has gotten the better of Saturn. Ask him who he has become over the last 10 years and he withdraws mentally into this wondrous world of imagination and pro wrestling.

"I'm the luckiest guy in the world ... on the path to paradise." □

Photo by Frank Vitucci

light heavyweights

(Continued from page 34)



No offense to either Scott Taylor or Aldo Montoya, two skilled aerial wrestlers, but the WWF needs a few more light heavyweights with stronger name recognition.

moves during a match. A broadcaster has to know the moves, be familiar with the wrestlers and their strategies, and be able to recognize new maneuvers. Jim Ross is very good at explaining moves, but the WWF needs to hire someone who's very familiar with the Japanese and Mexican styles.

7. Explain the moves to fans.

A weekly question-and-answer session on *Raw Is War*, or perhaps a "Move Of The Week" segment would give fans the knowledge they need to enjoy the light heavyweights to the fullest.

8. Don't force them to wrestle big men.

Light heavyweights around the world suffered a major blow when Rey Misterio Jr. was crushed by Kevin Nash on a recent *WCW Monday Nitro* broadcast. Sure, little men can beat big men, but not when they're at a 21-inch, 216-pound weight disadvantage. Keep the light heavyweights in their class. Let the big brawlers beat up on each other.

9. Tour Japan and Mexico.

The WWF has had a difficult time making inroads in

these wrestling outposts. Fans in Japan and Mexico love the light heavyweights. They'd appreciate the WWF making an attempt to showcase these talented wrestlers. Regular tours of Mexico and Japan with its light heavyweight stars would improve the federation's image ... and the division's quality. It might even help the WWF's recruiting efforts.

10. Pad the floor around the ring.

This would enable the light heavyweights to execute their most exciting moves without having to worry about suffering serious injuries. By giving these men the chance to be the best they can be, the WWF could be the home of the most exciting wrestling in the world. □

Network, or buy a pay-per-view event should expect to see at least one light heavyweight bout. The WWF needs to make the light heavyweight division an important part of its scheduling. That can't happen if the WWF schedules only occasional light heavyweight matches.

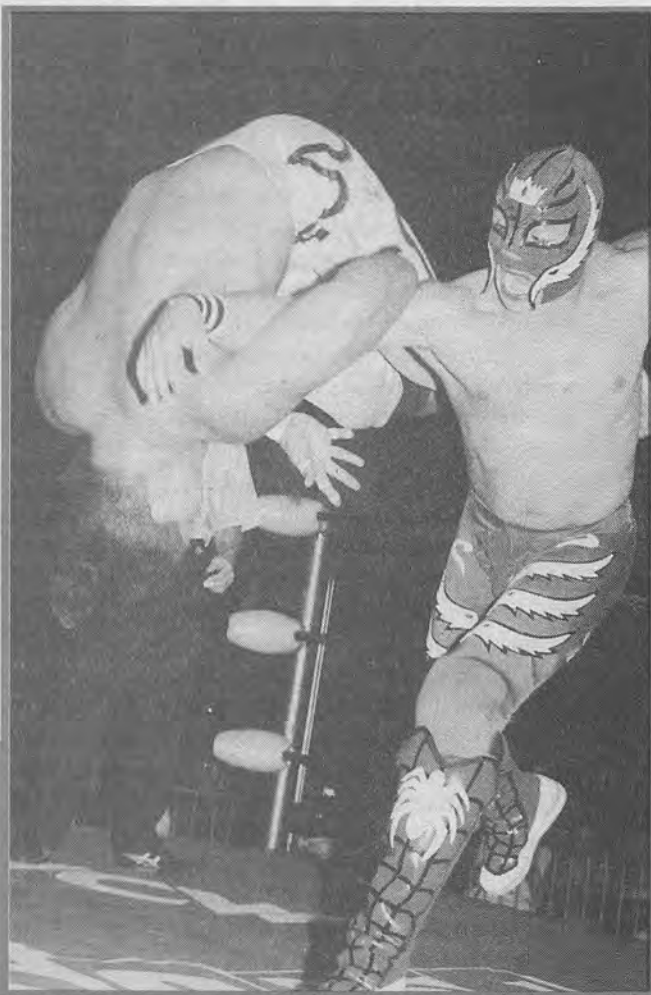
5. Have a tournament!

Okay, so the WWF is already planning a light heavyweight title tournament, but it must do it right. Offer a huge cash prize to the winner. That should be enough to attract plenty of great light heavyweights with name recognition. These smaller guys need a chance in the spotlight to show what they can do. Give them a chance to be their best. The fans will love it.

6. Use broadcasters who know what they're talking about.

Most light heavyweights have extensive scientific and/or aerial repertoires. Sometimes they invent

Many people regard Rey Misterio Jr. as the top light heavyweight in the sport today. Unfortunately for the WWF, he's under contract to WCW. But maybe when his contract runs out, the WWF could pursue him.

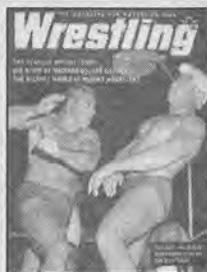


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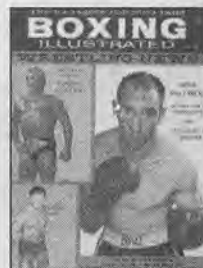
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February 1964 Edouard Carpentier vs. Killer Kowalski, Florida wrestling, Mad Dog Vachon, Fabulous Moolah, Fritz Von Erich, Rene Goulet, Cyclops, plus a full-color centerfold of Bruno Sammartino. **\$35**

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press conference

(Continued from page 23)



Guerrero has already used Malenko's favorite submission hold, the Texas cloverleaf, to beat him (left), and he has a decent figure-four, too (above). He is now vowing to end Malenko's career.

stuff like that back. Well, Dean got his. It took a while, but I got my revenge. If he thought he felt pain then and when I beat him in L.A., he'd best understand that this is just the appetizer. I've got a main course in store for him that will end his pathetic career.

LENKER: Between the time you lost the U.S. title—

GUERRERO: I didn't lose nothing. It was stolen from me.

LENKER: All right. You obviously became frustrated when you had to take those few months off with the shoulder injury, but does what happened between you and Malenko justify this change in philosophy?

GUERRERO: How many times do I have to say it? This is not a change in philosophy. This is Eddy Guerrero getting back to the basics. What I'm doing now is what I should have been doing all along. The people in the arenas are nothing more than fair-weather fans. When things were going good for

me, they'd cheer. But where were they during the bad times? Where were they when I got ripped off for my U.S. title?

MANKIEWICZ: Curious bit of strategy, don't you think? By causing Malenko to lose the title to someone else, you reduced your chances of beating him to regain your belt. You could be U.S. champ right now had you not interfered in the match.

GUERRERO: I'll get my belt back in due time. Maybe I let my hatred for Malenko impair my judgment, but I got the results I wanted. He has no title now and has to deal with an Eddy Guerrero that he has never faced in the past. He's a dirty wrestler. That much is a fact. But I'll show him dirty tactics like no one has ever seen before. Malenko's career will be over before I am through with him.

LENKER: Well, you made your feelings on Malenko clear, but what

about what's going on with your nephew Chavo Jr.? You used to talk with so much pride about the Guerrero tradition, but you sent him in there to face Syxx in your place and didn't help him at all when Syxx beat him up after the match. Then just a week or so later, you abandoned him during a tag team match and got into a fight with him backstage afterward. Something isn't right there.

GUERRERO: What gives you any right to make judgments about my family? I love my nephew, but he has to learn to fight his own battles. I never asked my brothers to fight my battles for me when I was getting started. He won't learn anything if I bail him out every night. If he acts like a punk and gets in my face about something, I'm gonna fight back. But enough about him already. This interview is supposed to be about me.

ANDERSON: Fine. Now we seem to have the new Eddy

Guerrero ... or actually the *old* Eddy Guerrero. What about tag teams? That's how you gained your fame down in AAA with Art Barr. Any chance of a new version of Los Gringos?

GUERRERO: You never know. WCW is bringing in many top-level Mexican stars. None that are on my level, of course, but stars just the same. Those days with Art are long past, and I will never be able to top what we did together. I don't even need a partner. With my speed and agility, I could take on any tag team by myself. Size isn't everything. Talent is. And I've got plenty to spare.

LENKER: Is there anything that you want to say to the people who have cheered for you over the past few years? I think they're entitled to an explanation.

GUERRERO: Explanation? I owe those fans nothing. What did they ever do for me? I put out 110 percent every night and what did I get out of it? Nothing, that's what. They were all for me when I was a champion. But when that ended

and I got hurt, what did fan support do for me? Nothing. They didn't help me. My message to the people is this: Thanks for nothing. I didn't need you then and I certainly don't need you now.

MANKIEWICZ: When any wrestler in WCW changes philosophies, the NWO rumors always start. Any contact with the group?

GUERRERO: Not yet. Right now, I'm interested in myself, not any group. I want my U.S. belt back before I make any other decisions. But after the way WCW treated me when I lost my belt and got injured, you just never know. The NWO is not so bad. They're very united and very focused and people are always talking about them. Plus they get results. That's all that really matters. You have to admire that.

ANDERSON: Eddy, we'd like to thank you for your time and for being so candid.

GUERRERO: That's what you say now. But wait until my back is turned. Typical Americans. Just like those stupid fans. It was no pleasure of mine. Adios!



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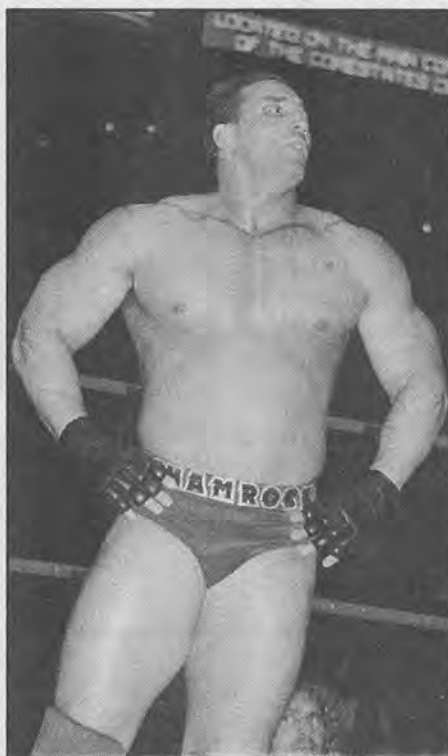
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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

TOP 10

- 1 THE UNDERTAKER**
328, parts unknown
(1) WWF World champion
- 2 JEFF JARRETT**
230, Nashville, TN
(3) U.S. heavyweight champion
- 3 OWEN HART**
227, Calgary, Alberta
(4) WWF Intercontinental champion
- 4 LEX LUGER**
265, Chicago, IL
(2) No. 3 contender: WCW World title
- 5 "DIAMOND" DALLAS PAGE**
260, Tampa, FL
(5) No. 2 contender: WCW World title
- 6 STEVE AUSTIN**
241, Dallas, TX
(6) No. 3 contender: WWF World title
- 7 CHRIS JERICO**
225, Vancouver, British Columbia
(-) WCW cruiserweight champion
- 8 CHRIS BENOIT**
218, Edmonton, Alberta
(-) No. 6 contender: WCW World title
- 9 TERRY FUNK**
247, Amarillo, TX
(8) ECW heavyweight champion
- 10 KEN SHAMROCK**
235, San Bernardino, CA
(-) No. 5 contender: WWF World title



Ken Shamrock

TAG TEAMS

- 1 THE GIANT & LEX LUGER**
Combined weight: 695 pounds
(1) No. 1 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 2 STEVE AUSTIN & DUDE LOVE**
Combined weight: 518 pounds
(-) WWF World tag team champions
- 3 RICK & SCOTT STEINER**
Combined weight: 483 pounds
(4) No. 2 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 4 OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH**
Combined weight: 472 pounds
(-) No. 1 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 5 SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH**
Combined weight: 646 pounds
(3) WCW World tag team champions
- 6 THE GANGSTAS**
Combined weight: 456 pounds
(10) ECW tag team champions
- 7 THE ROAD WARRIORS**
Combined weight: 560 pounds
(2) No. 2 contenders: WWF World tag title
- 8 PG-13**
Combined weight: 471 pounds
(-) USWA tag team champions
- 9 HARLEM HEAT**
Combined weight: 550 pounds
(5) No. 3 contenders: WCW World tag title
- 10 FAAROOQ & KAMA MUSTAFA**
Combined weight: 631 pounds
(-) No. 3 contenders: WWF World tag title

WCW

World Champion:

HULK HOGAN

(C) 275, Venice Beach, CA

- 1—JEFF JARRETT**
(1) 230, Nashville, TN
- 2—DIAMOND DALLAS PAGE**
(2) 260, Tampa, FL
- 3—LEX LUGER**
(3) 265, Chicago, IL
- 4—CHRIS JERICO**
(9) 225, Vancouver, British Columbia
- 5—SYXX**
(7) 212, Minneapolis, MN
- 6—CHRIS BENOIT**
(6) 218, Edmonton, Alberta
- 7—EDDY GUERRERO**
(-) 221, El Paso, TX
- 8—RIC FLAIR**
(-) 243, Charlotte, NC
- 9—RANDY SAVAGE**
(-) 237, Sarasota, FL
- 10—DEAN MALENKO**
(5) 216, Tampa, FL

WWF

World Champion:

THE UNDERTAKER

(C) 328, parts unknown

- 1—OWEN HART**
(1) 227, Calgary, Alberta
- 2—BRET HART**
(-) 235, Calgary, Alberta
- 3—STEVE AUSTIN**
(3) 241, Dallas, TX
- 4—BIG VAN VADER**
(2) 450, Denver, CO
- 5—KEN SHAMROCK**
(-) 235, San Bernardino, CA
- 6—GOLDUST**
(7) 254, Austin, TX
- 7—DAVEY BOY SMITH**
(9) 245, Leeds, England
- 8—HUNTER HEARST HELMSLEY**
(4) 279, Greenwich, CT
- 9—BRIAN PILLMAN**
(8) 226, Cincinnati, OH
- 10—FAAROOQ**
(6) 291, Perry, GA

ECW

ECW Champion:

TERRY FUNK

(C) 247, Amarillo, TX

- 1—TAZ**
(1) 248, Red Hook, NY
- 2—SHANE DOUGLAS**
(2) 240, Pittsburgh, PA
- 3—CHRIS CANDIDO**
(3) 226, Carteret, NJ
- 4—BAM BAM BIGELOW**
(-) 368, Mt. Laurel, NJ
- 5—LANCE STORM**
(-) 231, Memphis, TN
- 6—TOMMY DREAMER**
(4) 245, Yonkers, NY
- 7—ROB VAN DAM**
(7) 227, Battle Creek, MI
- 8—THE SANDMAN**
(6) 244, Philadelphia, PA
- 9—SABU**
(8) 220, Bombay
- 10—B. MAHONEY**
(10) 361, Carteret, NJ

USWA

USWA Champion:

JERRY LAWLER

(C) 234, Memphis, TN

- 1—DOOMSDAY**
(-) 345, parts unknown
- 2—BILLY TRAVIS**
(1) 218, Houston, TX
- 3—BRIAN CHRISTOPHER**
(2) 230, Memphis, TN
- 4—SPELLBINDER**
(8) 273, parts unknown
- 5—FLASH FLANAGAN**
(7) 221, Detroit, MI
- 6—P.G. WALKER**
(-) 225, Waterbury, CT
- 7—DUTCH MANTEL**
(5) 224, Oil Trough, TX
- 8—STEVEN DUNN**
(-) 240, Tampa, FL
- 9—NEW RAZOR**
(4) 345, Detroit, MI
- 10—PAUL DIAMOND**
(10) 243, Minneapolis, MN

OFFICIAL RATINGS

Top 10 and Tag Team ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and inherent skill of each wrestler or team. These ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board. All other ratings are based on the official current positions of challengers to the top title in each category; certain titleholders receive an automatic spot in the ratings. The number in parentheses indicates a wrestler's position in that category last issue; (-) indicates that the wrestler was not rated in that category last issue, while (C) indicates the wrestler was champion in that category last issue.

CUMULATIVE RATINGS

These ratings are based on the past 10 issues of this magazine. We have examined our ratings for each of these issues in our Top 10 and Tag Team categories only, and assigned each position a point value: 10 points for a first-place rating, nine for second place, and so on. The point values for all wrestlers in the past 10 issues have been compiled, with a possible maximum of 100 points. Each issue we'll present the top five finishers in each category. While our regular ratings reflect the past month, these cumulative ratings give an indication of wider trends in the sport.

SINGLES

1—THE UNDERTAKER	67 points
2—LEX LUGER	67 points
3—STEVE AUSTIN	45 points
4—DEAN MALENKO	38 points
5—OWEN HART	38 points

TAG TEAMS

1—OWEN HART & DAVEY BOY SMITH	70 points
2—SCOTT HALL & KEVIN NASH	64 points
3—THE GIANT & LEX LUGER	62 points
4—RICK & SCOTT STEINER	58 points
5—THE ROAD WARRIORS	46 points

For period ended July 22, 1997

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—Major Havoc; 1—Robert Roma; 2—Johnny Reb; 3—Brian Danzig; 4—Rick Deeze; 5—J.T. Sledge; 6—Red Scorpion; 7—King Cobra; 8—Neil Leathers; 9—Jumpin' Jimmy; 10—Dr. Love.
CENTURY WRESTLING ALLIANCE: Champion—Title Vacant; 1—Tony Rumble; 2—Tony Atlas; 3—Vic Steamboat; 4—Joel Davis; 5—Abdullah The Butcher; 6—Knuckles Nelson; 7—El Mascarado; 8—Pink Assassin; 9—Ace Darling; 10—Devon Storm.
EAST COAST WRESTLING ASSOCIATION: Champion—Glen Osbourne; 1—Ace Darling; 2—Rockin' Ronny; 3—Cheetah Master; 4—Devon Storm; 5—Boogie Woogie Brown; 6—Armageddon; 7—Reckless Youth; 8—Mike Quackenbush; 9—George Steele; 10—Primo Carnera III.

PENNSYLVANIA CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Cheetah Master; 1—Bart Gunn; 2—Glen Osbourne; 3—Ace Darling; 4—Boogie Woogie Brown; 5—Bob Holly; 6—Col. Jihad Hussein; 7—Reckless Youth; 8—Julio Sanchez; 9—Judd the Stud; 10—Mike Quackenbush.

PRO WRESTLING FEDERATION: Champion—George South; 1—Madd Maxxine; 2—Italian Stallion; 3—Terry Austin; 4—Flaming Youth; 5—Chris Hamrick; 6—Cruel Connection II; 7—Masked Mania; 8—Gladiator II; 9—Rock Bottom; 10—Wasted Youth.
PRO WRESTLING XPRESS: Champion—T. Rantula; 1—Mad Mike; 2—Scotty Blaze; 3—J.B. Destiny; 4—Lou Marconi; 5—Paul Atlas; 6—Samu; 7—Leviathan; 8—Dennis Gregory; 9—Sean Evans; 10—Jimmy Angel.

ULTIMATE CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING: Champion—Chris Chavis; 1—Paul Lauria; 2—Mike Norman; 3—Jimmy Deranged; 4—Falcon Coperis; 5—Kamikaze Kid; 6—Guillotine LeGrande; 7—Dave Desire; 8—Tony Hart; 9—Hans Von Gruber; 10—Rocky St. James.

NEW JAPAN

IWGP Champion:
SHINYA HASHIMOTO
 (C) 287, Gisu, Japan

- 1—**EL SAMURAI**
(-) 210, Tokyo, Japan
- 2—**KEIJI MUTO**
(1) 245, Tokyo, Japan
- 3—**JUSHIN LIGER**
(4) 206, Hiroshima, Japan
- 4—**MASA CHONO**
(3) 235, Tokyo, Japan
- 5—**RIKI CHOSHU**
(2) 246, Yamaguchi, Japan
- 6—**SHINJIRO OTANI**
(-) 215, Yokohama, Japan
- 7—**KOJI KANEMOTO**
(-) 205, Tokyo, Japan
- 8—**NAOYA OGAWA**
(6) 286, Yamanishi, Japan
- 9—**SCOTT NORTON**
(5) 360, Minneapolis, MN
- 10—**IMPOSTOR STING**
(10) 251, parts unknown

ALL-JAPAN

Triple Crown Champion:
MITSU HARU MISAWA
 (C) 228, Saitama, Japan

- 1—**AKIRA TAUE**
(3) 265, Tokyo, Japan
- 2—**TOSHI AKI KAWADA**
(1) 245, Tizhigi, Japan
- 3—**KENTA KOBASHI**
(2) 261, Tokyo, Japan
- 4—**JOHNNY ACE**
(5) 250, San Bernardino, CA
- 5—**JOHNNY SMITH**
(-) 235, Manchester, England
- 6—**YOSHINARI OGAWA**
(-) 202, Fichigi, Japan
- 7—**STEVE WILLIAMS**
(6) 265, Norman, OK
- 8—**STAN HANSEN**
(4) 322, Borger, TX
- 9—**MASA FUCHI**
(10) 225, Tokyo, Japan
- 10—**GARY ALBRIGHT**
(7) 343, Billings, MT

EMLL

EMLL Champion:
STEELE
 (C) 250, Winnipeg, Manitoba

- 1—**ATLANTIS**
(10) 180, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 2—**RAYO DE JALISCO JR.**
(3) 270, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 3—**EL HIJO DEL SANTO**
(4) 180, Tulancingo, Mexico
- 4—**NEGRO CASAS**
(6) 175, Mexico City, Mexico
- 5—**SHOCKER**
(1) 185, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 6—**SILVER KING**
(7) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
- 7—**HEADHUNTER I**
(2) 450, Santo Domingo
- 8—**DR. WAGNER JR.**
(9) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
- 9—**FELINO**
(8) 165, Mexico City, Mexico
- 10—**LIZMARK**
(-) 190, Mexico City, Mexico

PROMO AZTECA

Promo Azteca Champion:
TITLE VACANT

- 1—**KONNAN**
(1) 237, Mexico City, Mexico
- 2—**LA PARKA**
(2) 235, Torreon, Mexico
- 3—**PSICOSIS**
(3) 200, Tijuana, Mexico
- 4—**HECTOR GARZA**
(5) 215, Monterrey, CA
- 5—**MASCARA SAGRADA**
(6) 220, Mexico City, Mexico
- 6—**BLUE PANTHER**
(8) 215, Mexico City, Mexico
- 7—**CIEN CARAS**
(4) 235, Lagos de Moreno, Mexico
- 8—**VAMPIRO CANADIENSE**
(9) 220, Montreal, Quebec
- 9—**DANDY**
(10) 190, Guadalajara, Mexico
- 10—**MASCARA ANO DOS MIL**
(-) 228, Mexico City, Mexico

RATINGS ANALYSIS

Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating over 200 wrestlers in 19 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans.

Tag team shakeup. John Kronus of **The Eliminators** almost accomplished something very remarkable this month: He almost made our tag team ratings all by himself. Kronus isn't wrestling on his own out of arrogance, of course. He is doing it because his regular tag team partner, **Perry Saturn**, suffered a serious knee injury and could be out of action for up to one year as he recovers from surgery (see related story on page 24).



John Kronus

But rather than give up the ECW tag team title, which **The Eliminators** held at the time Saturn was injured, Kronus told promoters he'd defend the title by himself ... in handicap matches. A bit stunned, ECW officials said that was okay with them, and Kronus actually picked up some wins over **Buh Buh Ray** and **D-Von Dudley** and **Tracey Smothers** and **Little Guido**.

His good fortune ran out, however, on June 20, when the Dudley boys beat him and took the belts. As a result, they have moved up in the tag team rankings. Had Kronus continued to defend the ECW tag team title by himself on a long-term basis, we would have had to consider putting him in the ratings by himself.

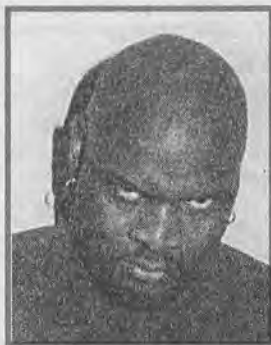
And that still might happen. The night after the title changed hands, Kronus was back in tag team competition (with no partner). He, Smothers and Guido, and **The Pit Bulls** lost to the Dudleys in a four-way match. He says he'll wrestle the Dudleys on his own again in the future, so perhaps he will be in our tag team ratings one of these days.

Injuries, injuries, injuries. So far in 1997, the WWF has had to deal with injuries to **Shawn Michaels** (knee), **Bret Hart** (knee and wrist), "**Psycho**" **Sid Vicious** (back), **Brian Pillman** (continued problems with his ankle), **The Sultan** (ribs), **Marc Mero** (knee), **Big Van Vader** (nose), **Henry Godwinn** (broken vertebra), and **Faarooq** (shoulder). All missed time because of their ailments. Even **Steve Austin** has had to gamely battle through knee and neck injuries, and World champion **The Undertaker**, if you look very closely, at times seems to be limping.

The situation only got worse in June, when **Sid, Flash Funk, Doug Furnas, and Phil Lafon** were involved in an automobile accident as they drove from Montreal to a WWF card in Ottawa. The good news: Though the car they were in flipped over several times, none of the four suffered any life-threatening injuries. But only **Flash Funk** was able to return to competition almost immediately.

Sid had just come back from a lower back injury, and he apparently aggravated that problem. Lafon suffered a concussion, but the big problem was with **Furnas**, who broke his right shoulderblade and fractured a vertebra. He had surgery on his shoulder after the accident and is out indefinitely. Even though the WWF signed **The Road Warriors** earlier this year, the federation still doesn't have a surplus of great tag teams, so the absence of **Furnas** and **Lafon** (they're not in the ratings this month) will hurt in that respect (**Sid**, incidentally, is also absent from the ratings).

Less than two weeks after that car accident in Canada (and just 13 days before he was to get his first shot at the WWF World title), **Ahmed Johnson** injured his knee during a wild **Nation of Domination-Disciples of Apocalypse** brawl and needed surgery to repair that. As a result, he does not appear in our ratings this issue. There are a lot of people who say that sometimes when they look at the top 10 from WCW and compare it to the top 10 of the WWF, they are amazed at how much better WCW's talent roster is.

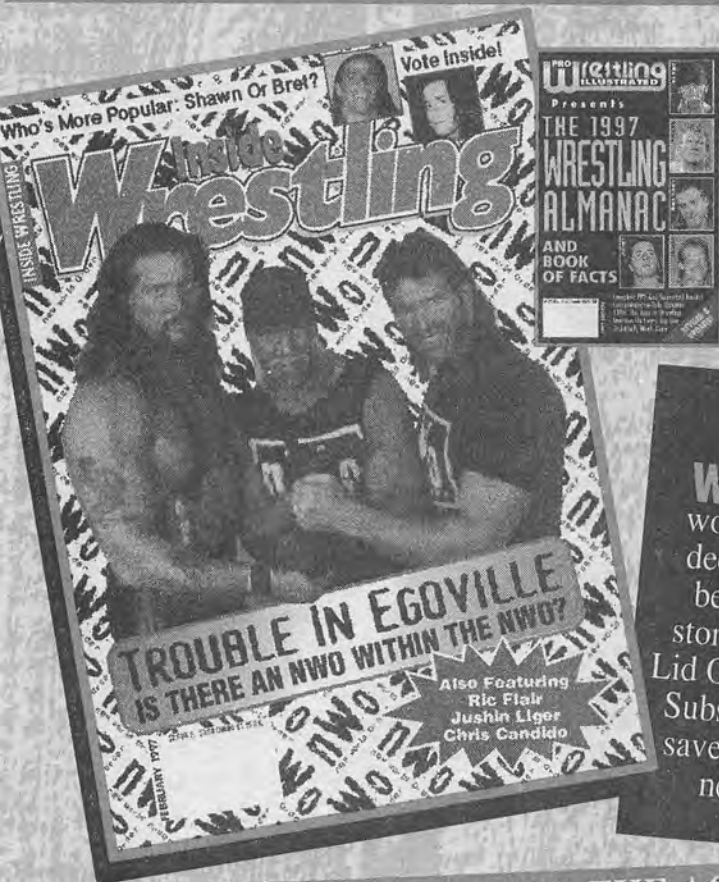


Ahmed Johnson

That may be true, but the WWF's top 10 would look a lot better if it could just get all its talent healthy at the same time.

That's all for this month. If you have any comments or questions that pertain to our ratings section or anything that you see on this page, please feel free to express your opinion. Write to: "Ratings Analysis," c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED, Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. □

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“ECW CLIQUE” FORMING IN WCW? Raven, Richards In; Sandman Could Be Next

By ANDY RODRIGUEZ

MEMPHIS, TN—Just a few months after ECW wrestlers began appearing regularly on *WWF Raw Is War*, two former ECW stars, Raven and Stevie Richards, showed up on *Nitro* amidst rumors that The Sandman would soon follow. Some observers believe Raven, Richards, and whoever might follow will eventually band together and take on the NWO.

Raven sat in the front row of the crowd during his first two *Nitro* appearances. Not even Richards, once his flunkie and eventually one of his main rivals in ECW, couldn't get him to talk.

“Raven and I had our problems in the past,” said Richards, “but he'll come around. We were great together

before and we'll be great together again. Just imagine what we could do here. There's a lot of interesting stuff going on, and we could easily cause a lot of people a lot of trouble.”

When asked if he had any plans to build a supergroup with Raven and others who might defect from ECW, Richards merely smiled and shrugged his shoulders. If Sandman does come to WCW and join Raven and Richards, the alliance figures to be tenuous at best. He feuded with Raven for months on end and even saw his ex-wife and young son turn against him and side with Raven for a while.

Sandman also had some battles with Richards during Stevie's final few months in ECW.



Stevie Richards and Raven were quite close when they were in ECW together in 1995. They might be forming their own supergroup in WCW now.

Austin vs. Shamrock UFC Style?

By BILL APTER

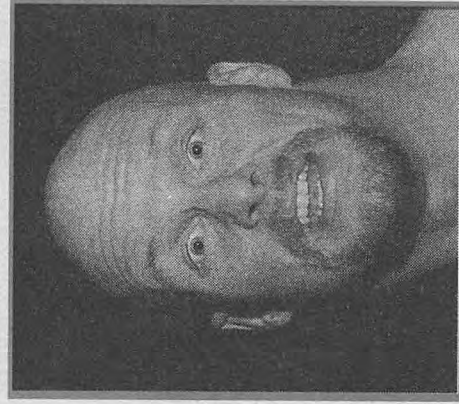
CALGARY, ALBERTA—Steve Austin was angry when he was pinned by Owen Hart during the 10-man tag team match at In Your House Canadian Stampede, but he was furious just minutes later when Ken Shamrock, one of his tag team partners in the match, blamed him for the loss. In fact, he was so furious that he challenged the former Ultimate Fighter to a UFC-style match.

"Before I even got back to my damn dressing room," Austin said, "I heard that punk mouthing off about how it was my

fault we lost. He ain't been here more than a few months, so he's got no right to criticize me. I'd just as soon take on the whole Hart Foundation myself than team with him. He can have a piece of me if he wants it. We can even use those UFC rules."

Shamrock, a former UFC champ, laughed when asked about the challenge from "Stone-Cold."

"He wouldn't know what he'd be getting himself into," Shamrock said, "but if he keeps pushing this, maybe he'll get what he's asking for."



Steve Austin isn't afraid of any wrestler in the WWF, but he might have made a big mistake by challenging Ken Shamrock to a UFC-style match.

Sasaki, Hokuto Targeted By NWO

By MATT BROCK

KANAZAWA, JAPAN—Now that Keiji Muto (The Great Muta) has pledged his allegiance to the NWO, the group's Japanese division has set its sights on two more New Japan superstars, former WCW U.S. champ Kensuke Sasaki and his wife, current WCW World Women's champ Akira Hokuto.

Just like it did with Muto, the NWO has made numerous financial offers to Sasaki with the hope that if he joins, Hokuto will follow, but so far he has turned the group down every time. The NWO's influence in New Japan has become so strong that at some cards, it insists that all ringside photographers and camera operators wear NWO T-shirts.

Sasaki became enraged when he saw all the NWO shirts at one of these cards and ripped the shirt off the back of one of the camera operators.

"I will never be NWO," Sasaki said. "Muto said the same thing, but I have more integrity than he does."

"Here we go again," said Eric Bischoff. "Same story all over again. He has his price, and we'll get to it eventually."

AROUND THE GLOBE

SAPPORO, JAPAN

Michael Wall Street was not happy when J.J. Dillon, shortly after being named chairman of the WCW Executive Committee earlier this year, declared Wall Street's contract with the NWO invalid. Though no longer an official member of the organization, he teamed with NWO Sting, Hiro Saito, and Hiroyoshi Tenzan, who are all NWO, to win a key match on a New Japan card this summer.

GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Jim Neidhart agrees with his brother-in-law Bret Hart when Bret says fans in Canada, Europe, and South Africa are more intelligent than American fans, but no, that wasn't Neidhart competing for the Catch Wrestling Association in Austria this summer. Powerhouse Neidhart had a lot of success in the CWA, but it's not the same man.

TOKYO, JAPAN

The Lacrosse is certainly an unusual name for a young wrestler to choose, but the man using that moniker in All-Japan is doing rather well. Steve Williams and Gary Albright, two tough veterans of that promotion, have liked what they've seen from him recently and have asked Lacrosse to be their regular partner in six-man matches.

Doomsday Means Doom For USWA

By LIZ HUNTER

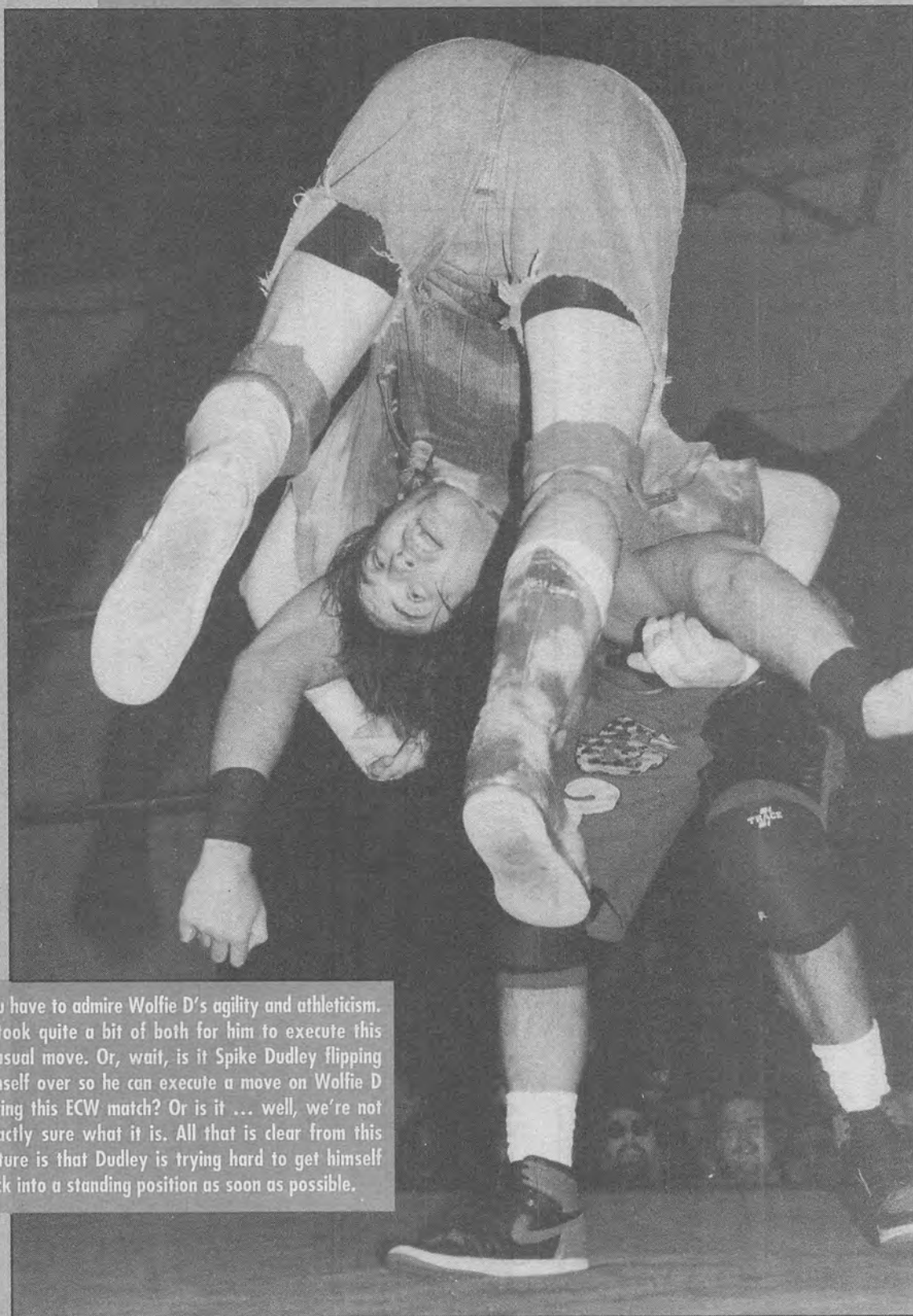
LOUISVILLE, KY—The New Razor Ramon thought he had made his life in the USWA a lot easier when he defeated The New Diesel, his former tag team partner, in a loser-leaves-town match. Just days after that match, however, manager Luther Biggs introduced his latest USWA protegee, Doomsday, a man with a build suspiciously similar to that of Diesel.

Biggs said he brought the big man, who wears a hockey mask and leather gloves, to the USWA to protect him and the other man he manages, Billy Joe Travis.

It didn't take Doomsday long to get involved in the action. In his first appearance on USWA TV, he intervened when Brian Christopher was about to smash Biggs with Travis' guitar. Christopher instead hit Doomsday over the head with the instrument, and Doomsday didn't even move. He then pressed Christopher over his head and dropped him face-first on the broadcasters' desk.

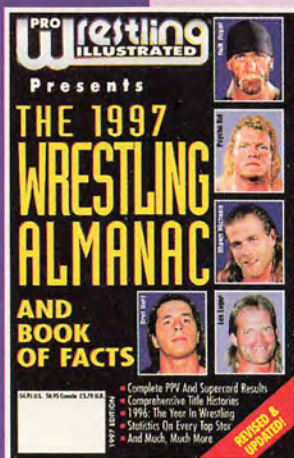
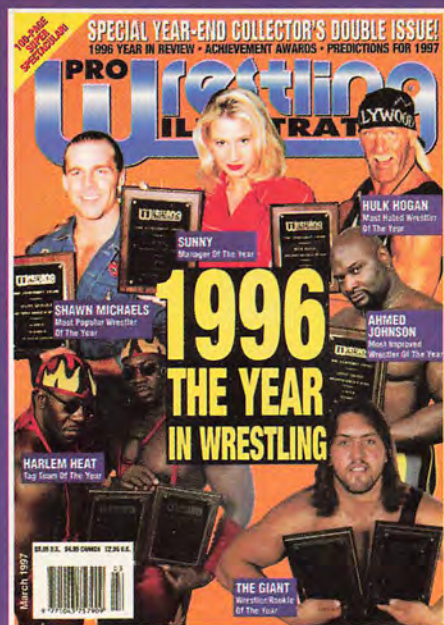
"This monster will take on all these no-talent bums in the USWA," said Biggs. "Christopher, Jerry Lawler, Razor Ramon—he ain't afraid of none of 'em."

HOT SHOT



You have to admire Wolfie D's agility and athleticism. It took quite a bit of both for him to execute this unusual move. Or, wait, is it Spike Dudley flipping himself over so he can execute a move on Wolfie D during this ECW match? Or is it ... well, we're not exactly sure what it is. All that is clear from this picture is that Dudley is trying hard to get himself back into a standing position as soon as possible.

Photo by Frank Vitucci



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